Attitudes of Swedish Learners of Japanese towards Japanese Dialects

A quantitative study

Elsa Fahl

jap15efa@student.lu.se

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Lund University
Centre for Languages and Literature, Japanese Studies
Supervisor: Shinichiro Ishihara

ABSTRACT

The present thesis is a quantitative study investigating the attitudes of Swedish learners of Japanese towards Japanese dialects. Current or previous Swedish students of Japanese completed a survey in which they listened to recordings of five different dialects of Japanese, and evaluated these dialects in terms of various personality traits. Furthermore, their ability to identify the dialects was tested. The results of the study showed that Swedish learners of Japanese held quite neutral attitudes towards Japanese dialects, and were also generally similar to native Japanese attitudes. Differences in attitudes were found depending on the informants' gender, self-perceived proficiency of Japanese and previous exposure to Japanese.

Keywords: Japanese, dialects, language attitudes, dialect attitudes, dialect identification

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CONVENTIONS

The Modified Hepburn system is used for romanisation of Japanese words. However, instead of macrons, double letters are used to indicate a long vowel. Personal names and place names are written as is conventional in English, e.g. the name of the Japanese capital is written as ‘Tokyo’, rather than ‘Tookyoo’.

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 The topic

The topic of the present thesis is Swedish learners' attitudes towards Japanese dialects. The purpose of the study is to investigate what attitudes Swedish learners of Japanese hold towards Japanese dialects, if they can identify Japanese dialects, and if their attitudes differ or resemble native Japanese attitudes. The study was carried out through an online survey, in which native Japanese and Swedish learners of Japanese listened to voice recordings by speakers from Oita, Hiroshima, Aichi, Tokyo and Akita. The informants evaluated the speakers according to how pleasant, clear, gentle, funny and intelligent they sounded, and were asked to identify which dialect they spoke. The results were then analysed quantitatively, and the Swedish answers were compared to the native Japanese ones.

1.3 Research questions

1. Are Swedish learners of Japanese able to identify Japanese dialects?
2. What attitudes do Swedish learners of Japanese hold towards different Japanese dialects?
3. What background variables (if any) affect the Swedish learners' attitudes towards Japanese dialects?
4. Do the Swedish learners' identification ability and attitudes differ in comparison to those of native Japanese speakers? How?

Chapter 2
Previous research

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a summary of previous research relevant to the present study will be presented. First, a general description of the history and categorisations of Japanese dialects is provided, followed by summaries of previous studies on attitudes towards language varieties.

2.2 Japanese dialects

Historically, Japan has been home to a great number of regional dialects, which in many cases are mutually unintelligible (Carroll 2001:7). With the modernisation of Japan, a need arose for a standard language that could be used throughout the country. Since the late 19th century, a variety of Japanese spoken by the educated upper-middle class in Tokyo had been spreading throughout Japan as a "de facto common language" (ibid:7); this became the basis for the standard language, *hyoojungo* (later also referred to as *kyootsuugo* 'common language'), finally established in the beginning of the 20th century (Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith 2016). In the process of establishing this new standard language, dialects and dialect speakers were marginalised and stigmatised, and school children were taught not to use their own dialects. Speaking a dialect was seen as something shameful and something to be ridiculed, which lead people to develop a so-called "dialect complex". In the 1970s, attitudes towards dialects began to change as it was feared that they were becoming extinct. Efforts were made to revive them and reteach them to children, and official policies on the use of dialects were changed. The new directives were to teach both standard language and the local dialect in school, and teach the students to use code-switching, i.e. switching between using standard and dialect depending on social context, where it is deemed appropriate (Carroll 2001). Recent studies show that attitudes towards dialects are generally positive: rather than ugly and rough, they are perceived as warm and nostalgic (Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith 2016).

There are several ways in which to group dialects in Japan, the most general one being the East and the West group, which are separated by the Northern and Central Japanese Alps (Iwasaki 2013:1). Another division is the Eastern, Central, Western and Kyushu groups (Hasegawa 2015:21–22); while yet another is the eight groups of Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kanto,

Chubu, Kansai, Chugoku, Shikoku and Kyushu & Okinawa (Okamoto & Smith 2016:75–76). The present study will generally refer to the latter, eight-region division.

2.3 Previous language attitude research

Much research has been done in the field of language attitude studies, not the least in Japan. In this subchapter, previous research on attitudes towards Japanese dialects, as well as varieties in other languages will be presented.

2.3.1 Attitudes of native Japanese towards Japanese dialects

In their book on Japanese sociolinguistics, Okamoto and Shibamoto-Smith (2016) discuss previous research on native attitudes towards Japanese dialects. The findings from the studies discussed are summarised below.

Inoue's (1989) study conducted in the 1970s investigated attitudes towards the Tokyo, Tohoku and Kansai dialects, and found that the Tokyo dialect was perceived favourably on intellectual and affective dimensions, but had low nostalgic value among the informants. Tohoku dialect was rated highly on nostalgia, but was not on the intellectual and affective scales, whereas Kansai dialect was not seen as intellectual, but both affective and nostalgic (Inoue 1989, cited in Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith 2016:78–79).

The results from the mid-90s attitude surveys reported by Satoo and Yoneda (1999) showed that Standard Japanese (*kyootsuugo*) was considered "beautiful" and "polite", but "not richly expressive" and "not natural", whereas regional dialects were considered "friendly" and "richly expressive", but also "rough" and "emotional" (Satoo & Yoneda 1999, cited in Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith 2016:79).

Tanaka's (2011) study conducted in 2007 found Tokyo dialect – "likely to have been understood as Standard Japanese" (Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith 2016:79) – to be perceived as "cool" and "refined", but "scary", "boring", "not cute" and "cold". The Aomori (Tohoku) dialect was "interesting", "warm" and "natural", but "not cute" and "not cool". Okinawan dialects were seen positively as "interesting", "cute", "warm" and "gentle", while no negative descriptors were assigned. Kyoto dialect also only had positive descriptors: "cute", "cool", "warm", "refined" and "gentle". Tanaka's 2011 follow-up study also found regional dialects to generally be positively perceived (Tanaka 2011, cited in Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith 2016:79–80).

Okamoto and Shibamoto-Smith (2016) also note that recent studies have shown that the perception of regional dialects in general may have become more positive as compared to earlier.

However, there are differences in perception between different dialects. Okamoto and Shibamoto-Smith (2016) bring up the contrast in perception between Tohoku and Kansai dialects. Tohoku, with its history as Tokyo's "'bread-basket' and source of cheap unskilled labor" (Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith 2016:80), has generally been stigmatised and rated negatively, while Kansai, and especially the dialect of Kyoto, the previous capital of Japan, has enjoyed a much more positive image. Recently, the Osaka dialect has become known as funny and friendly, due to being associated with comedy. Furthermore, the Kyushu dialect is noted to be associated with masculinity, and Okinawan dialects with warmth and friendliness (ibid:80–81).

In a study by Long (1999), informants drew perceived dialect regions on a map of Japan and ranked these in order of pleasantness, as well as assigned characteristics for each region. The informants tended to identify Kansai, Kanto and their own home region (in that order of frequency) as the regions with the most pleasant speech, whereas standard speech was perceived to be spoken in Kanto and Hokkaido. Thus, standardness did not equal pleasantness (except possibly in the case of Kanto). Long also highlighted the finding that Hiroshima was not rated the most pleasant by a single informant. In addition, it was seen that Hiroshima and Fukuoka informants did not regard each other's dialects as pleasant. Examining the characteristics assigned to dialect regions, Long found that both Kansai and Kanto informants had strong positive and negative opinions on the Kansai region, although the Kansai informants generally perceived it positively. In contrast, Kanto informants did not see their own speech region as anything other than *mushoku toomei* "colourless and transparent" (Long 1999:214). Within Kansai, Kyoto was generally perceived positively, whereas Osaka was perceived negatively. Moreover, Tohoku was the most commonly drawn dialect region, while Kansai was the second most commonly drawn region.

In Inoue's (1999) study, only the Southern Kanto dialect (Tokyo area) had a positive intellectual image, while Tohoku, Nara and Miyazaki had extremely negative intellectual images. Most Western and Southern dialects had negative intellectual images, except for Yamaguchi and Hiroshima, which were neutral. Out of the Eastern dialects, East Chubu region and Hokkaido were neutral; Ibaraki and Tochigi, which are north of the Tokyo area (Northern Kanto), were negative. The only areas with positive emotional images were (the most part of)

Kansai and Shikoku. Negative areas were all of Kyushu except Kumamoto and Kagoshima, as well as Yamaguchi, Hiroshima, Ibaraki and Tochigi.

Fornander (2015) used Labov's (1972) system of categorising linguistic features as indicators, markers or stereotypes to investigate native speakers' awareness of various dialect features in Japanese. In the survey conducted for the research, the participants were presented with Japanese sentences that contained features from different dialects – some even mixing dialects in the same sentence (which the participants were unaware of). They were asked to guess which dialect each sentence was written in, and to state how difficult it was to guess and how they came to their conclusion. Doing that, he would find out which dialectal features were easier to recognise than others. Many of the features used in the survey were categorised as markers, while only the Kansai expression *akanyaro* "no good" (Fornander 2015:12) could be considered a stereotype.

2.3.2 Non-native attitudes towards language varieties

Cunningham-Andersson (1995) investigated native and non-native Swedish speakers' ability to discriminate between and identify Swedish dialects. The results showed that many non-natives could discriminate between dialects on the same level as native speakers, but on average, the non-native speakers could not discriminate between dialects as well as the native speakers. On the dialect identification task, native speakers fared significantly better than the non-native speakers. Moreover, how long the non-native speakers had lived in Sweden correlated to how well they could identify the dialects. The length of time spent in Sweden was also found to be more significant to their identification ability than their proficiency in the Swedish language was. However, there was considerable variation in the results of both the natives and non-natives, and the final conclusion was that no clear differences could be found between native and non-native listeners.

Sullivan & Karst (1996) compared the ability of native British English speakers and Swedish learners of English to identify and discriminate between varieties of spoken English. One part of the purpose of the study was to find out how much attention Swedish learners pay to accents when hearing English on television, etc. It was found that the Swedes' identification ability was quite similar to the English natives', while their discriminative ability was not as high as the one the English demonstrated. It was also concluded that the Swedes do pay attention to accents when watching English-language film and television, and that how well they can identify the accents depends on the level of exposure to them.

Ladegaard (1998) conducted a study of attitudes towards English varieties among Danish learners of English. He aimed to discover what stereotypes people who are not part of the social and cultural context of the speech they hear hold towards language varieties and what reasons are behind these stereotypes. Ladegaard found that the attitudes of the Danish learners generally resembled those of native speakers in the UK and the USA. Even though American culture was preferred over British culture by the majority of the participants, Standard British accent (RP) was by far the highest rated accent on all traits assessed in the survey, except solidarity and sense of humour. These findings were consistent with the attitudes found in many other countries. They were attributed to the way of teaching English in Denmark, where teachers tend to teach British English, and there is an emphasis on "Standard" and "correct" English (Ladegaard 1998). Another interesting finding was that although very few participants could correctly identify the other accents in the survey (Scottish, Australian and Cockney), they nonetheless held similar stereotypes to those commonly associated with these accents in English-speaking environments. Ladegaard concluded that the reason for this may be that people may acquire stereotypes about an accent on a subconscious level through media, even if they cannot consciously recognise which accent it is. Furthermore, Ladegaard mentioned that studies on attitudes towards language varieties seem to show the same pattern even in different cultures: standard varieties are rated high on status and low on social attractiveness; rural varieties are rated low on status and high on social attractiveness; urban varieties are rated low on both status and social attractiveness.

McKenzie has done extensive research on Japanese people's attitudes towards English language varieties, both native regional dialects of English and World Englishes. In his 2006 thesis, he conducted a quantitative study in which 558 Japanese university students learning English participated in a survey investigating their attitudes towards six varieties of native and non-native English speech, and their ability to identify these varieties. McKenzie found that the Japanese learners could differentiate between varieties of English, although not always correctly identify them. Varieties of inner circle (e.g. British, American) English speech were rated more positively on prestige than varieties of expanding circle (e.g. Japanese) varieties. Furthermore, non-standard English varieties were rated more positively on solidarity than standard varieties. The informants' attitudes were found to differ according to gender, self-perceived competence in English, exposure to the English language, and attitudes towards varieties of Japanese. There was also a tendency for informants to rate varieties they were more familiar with higher than varieties they could not identify. In addition, McKenzie noted that the

more exposed learners of English become to English language media, the more similar their perceptions become to those of native speakers.

Blackmore's 2010 thesis investigated the perceptions of Swedish upper secondary school students towards four different varieties of spoken English: two British accents and two Australian accents. The students generally claimed to be familiar with and understand the accents well. However, the majority could not correctly identify the origin of the accents. A fourth of the students had been to an English-speaking country before, and a third of the students had been exposed to different English accents in the classroom. Unfortunately, the potential effect these factors could have on the students' ability to identify accents was not discussed in the thesis. Blackmore found that accents that were perceived as rural were also rated highly on pleasantness and likability. These results are in accordance with the attitudes on Japanese dialects mentioned previously in the present chapter.

2.3.3 Non-native attitudes towards Japanese dialects

Currently, the studies on non-native Japanese speakers' attitudes towards Japanese dialects are quite few in number.

Chang (2012) researched non-native learners' perceptions of Japanese dialects, and their ability to identify them. Foreign exchange students at Hiroshima University completed a survey in which they listened to eight voice recordings of speakers of the following Japanese dialects: Nagasaki (Kyushu), Fukuoka (Kyushu), Ehime (Shikoku), Hiroshima (Chugoku), Hyogo (Kansai), Kyoto (Kansai), and Kanagawa (Kanto). The informants were asked to fill in a semantic-differential scale of various traits for each dialect, rate how much they liked the dialect, state whether they thought the speaker was speaking standard Japanese or dialect, and identify the regional origin of the speaker. The results were analysed according to the participants' level of proficiency in the Japanese language, as well as their length of stay in Japan. The informants participating in the study were from China, Indonesia, Australia, USA, Iran and Vietnam. In total, 15 students participated. The results showed that foreign students of Japanese did not have any particularly strong like or dislike towards Japanese dialects. However, dialects that were difficult to hear and understand were perceived more negatively, while dialects that were easy to hear and understand were perceived more positively. Speech varieties which were easy to understand were also more readily assumed to be standard Japanese, while those that were difficult to understand were perceived as non-standard. This was attributed to the influence of standard Japanese being used in language education. Moreover, Chang mentioned that the

results of the impressions of Hiroshima dialect were consistent with previous findings, which showed that non-native learners of Japanese take a more neutral stance towards the dialect compared to natives, who hold negative attitudes. The results from the identification task revealed that with a few exceptions, it was very difficult for learners of Japanese to identify Japanese dialects. Furthermore, it was seen that when forming impressions of and identifying Japanese dialects, foreign students are influenced by stereotypical dialect expressions they hear in the media, and the region of Japan they live in. Based on this, they tend to think dialectal expressions which are in fact used in many regions, are specific to only one dialect, leading them to misidentify dialects.

Hennessy & Kuwabara (2015) investigated through interviews what non-native Japanese speakers living in Fukui (Aichi prefecture) think about the local dialect and whether they desire to learn it. The results suggested that, while they may not be able to understand it, the majority of the participants could identify the Fukui dialect. Some of them had no desire to learn the Fukui dialect, but on the other hand wanted to learn the Kansai dialect, which suggests a positive attitude towards Kansai, but not Fukui dialect, among these participants.

Chapter 3
The study

3.1 Introduction

In chapter 3, the design of the present study will be described.

3.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the present study is to investigate Swedish learners' attitudes towards, and their ability to identify, different Japanese dialects. As seen in chapter 2, little research has been conducted regarding non-native attitudes towards Japanese dialects. Furthermore, no studies have been found that include Swedish nationals. Therefore, there is a justification to research Swedish attitudes towards Japanese dialects.

3.3 Research questions

In order to study the issue described above, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Are Swedish learners of Japanese able to identify Japanese dialects?
2. What attitudes do Swedish learners of Japanese hold towards different Japanese dialects?
3. What background variables (if any) affect the Swedish learners' attitudes towards Japanese dialects?
4. Do the Swedish learners' identification ability and attitudes differ in comparison to those of native Japanese speakers? How?

3.4 Methodology

To answer the research questions, a quantitative study was conducted by means of an online questionnaire. The design was based on the survey by McKenzie (2006). Swedish (current or former) students of Japanese listened to audio clips of conversations between

speakers of five different dialects of Japanese. Each audio clip was accompanied by an evaluation task, in which the informants were asked to convey their impressions of the speech through a semantic-differential scale, and an identification task, where they chose from a list of options which dialect they thought was being spoken. To provide a basis for comparison to native Japanese attitudes, a similar survey was also sent out to native speakers of Japanese. The results of the survey were subsequently analysed according to a number of background variables.

3.4.1 Stimuli

The audio clips used as stimuli in the questionnaire were taken from the online database *hoogen roorupurei kaiwa deetabeesu*, 'dialect roleplay conversation database', which is run by the researcher Fumiko Inoue at NINJAL, the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics[1]. The database consists of recordings of roleplay telephone conversations between pairs of speakers from various places in Japan. The speakers in each pair are the same sex; about the same age, labelled as either young or old; and come from the same prefecture or region. The conversations are based on instructions given to the speakers. Four different scenarios are played out.

In the present survey, ten conversations were used in total, one by an old pair and one by a young pair for each dialect. The old speakers were between 70 and 79 years old and the young speakers were between 21 and 25 years old at the time of recording. To control potentially affecting factors, all pairs chosen for the survey were male, and all conversations were based on the same instruction. The following scenario is played out: speaker A is invited by speaker B to a social gathering. Speaker A declines initially, but is then persuaded by speaker B to accept the invitation.

To reduce the amount of time required to finish the questionnaire and reduce the risk of listener fatigue, the audio files, which originally were about 1 minute long, were cut to about 40 seconds each.

When choosing speakers, I referred to the eight dialect regions of Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kanto, Chubu, Kansai, Chugoku, Shikoku and Kyushu & Okinawa (as mentioned previously in section 2.1). Hokkaido and Shikoku were not represented in the database, and there were no old speakers from Kansai, which left Tohoku, Kanto, Chubu, Chugoku and Kyushu & Okinawa.

[1] Available at http://hougen-db.sakuraweb.com/index.html

From each of the remaining five regions, speakers from one prefecture or area were chosen. The speakers came from the following prefectures and regions: Aichi, Akita, Hiroshima and Oita prefectures, and the Greater Tokyo Area. The speakers from the Greater Tokyo Area will be referred to as 'Tokyo speakers'.

Below follow transcribed and translated examples of the speech in some of the audio clips. Typical dialectal words or expressions are bolded.

Oita, old speakers:

B: n–, **naran chitchi**, maa **sora–**, minna ga moo, omae ga kuru no **matchon no ya ken** no–.
B: Mm, if it doesn't work, well that's, everyone's already looking forward for you to come.

A: n– maa, u, **washa**–, **soyakendo**, itta tte anta–, taishita koto **arasen no ya**. // sake nomu **daken kotcha**.
A: Mm well, uh, I, but, what you said, it's not a big thing. Just drinking together.

B: iya, **sogen** koto, **sogen** koto ne– wa, mo. omae ga kitate, mo, taishita koto ne– tatte, omae,
B: No, that's, that's… Well. If you'd come, even if it's not a big thing, you,

Oita, young speakers:

B: tsugi no hi gakkoo **ya** shi, noman to omou shi,
B: Since it's school the next day, they probably won't drink…

A: a–.
A: Aa.

B: n, maa,
B: Mm, well,

A: // soo **ya** na–.
A: // I guess so…

B: shokujikai **tchi** kangaete kurereba ii **ken**.
B: So you can think about it as a dinner party.

Hiroshima, old speakers:

B: shinbokukai– de, ano–, higaeri ryokoo yaroo ka **yuute iyo–run** yo.
B: At the meeting, um, we were talking about if we should go on a day trip.

A: a, higaeri ryokoo ne.
A: Ah, a day trip?

B: // o–.
B: Yeah.

A: n–.
A: Mm.

B: **hoide–,** maa, A san mo issho ni ittara, tanoshin ja nai ka no– **omoute**,
B: And then, well, we thought it would be fun if you could come with us too,

Hiroshima, young speakers:

A: maa, jaa, nani, ku ji kara itte–,
A: Well, okay, what, we go at nine,

B: a–.
B: Yeah.

A: ichi jikan de kaette mo ii, mitai na ↑ .
A: And it's okay to leave at one?

B: a–, **ee, ee, ee**. **jake** moo, paa tto ryoori furumatte, moo, paa tto kaette kurete **ee** yo.
B: Mm, yeah, yeah, yeah. So you can just bring the food quickly, and then like, go home again quickly.

Aichi, old speakers:

B: ryokoo ga, raishuu nichiyoobi ni aru ga ne.
B: There's a trip next Sunday.

A: a–.
A: Ah.

B: anta **ikiyoru da ra**–.
B: Are you going?

A: a, nichiyoobi wa chotto, **ora**, yooji ga aru na–.
A: Ah, Sunday is a bit, I've got plans then.

B: n–, yooji aru **kai**.
B: Mm, you've got plans?

A: n–, doo itara **ee kai** // na–.
A: Mm, what should I do…

Tokyo, young speakers:

B: chotto, koo, boonenkai kanete ikoo kana– tte.
B: I thought we should like, combine it with a year-end party.

A: nan ji gurai kara, sore.

A: When does that start?

B: e, maa, soodana–. dai, mada sonna kimatte nai kedo,
B: Eh, well, let's see… It's not decided that exactly yet,

A: un.
A: Mm.

B: ma, roku ji ka shichi ji toka.
B: Well, six or seven-ish?

A: roku ji shichi ji.
A: six–seven.

Akita, old speakers:

B: moo, choonaikai ni, ano–, yosan wa aru **gara**, ano,
B: The neighbourhood association, um, has a budget so, um,

A: un.
A: Mm.

B: **nanttoga**, kimi **dage** wa, sanka shite **moraidai** no yo.
B: Anyhow, I just want you to join, you know.

A: hai, **wagarimashita**.
A: Yes, I understand.

Akita, young speakers:

B: - - - chotto konshuu no nichiyoobi ni,
B: - - - so this Sunday,

A: // un un.
A: // Mhm.

B: maa, sono– sensei to uchi no sensei to, ato wa, maa, kenkyuushitsu no minna to,
B: Well, those teachers and our teachers, and, well, everyone from the lab,

A: u–n.
A: Mm.

B: chotto, maa, nomikai mitaina koto o // yaroo kana tte iu,
B: They were talking about having a sort of drinking party,

A: o, ho– ho– ho– ho– ho– ho– // ho–.
A: A, ahaa, ahaa, ahaa, ahaa, ahaa, ahaa.

B: hanashi ga arun desu yo.
B: There's been talk about that.

3.4.2 The informants

All informants in the Swedish part of the present study spoke Swedish as their native language (or one of their native languages). They were either studying Japanese at the time of participation, or had previously studied Japanese. What type of institution the studying took place at was not controlled, thus it is possible that there are informants who have studied at universities or other higher education institutions in Sweden, high schools in Sweden, universities or language schools in Japan, or self-studied. However, the participants were informed in the questionnaire that it primarily regarded full time studies; informants who had studied Japanese at high school were instructed to count the total time of studying there as 'less than one year', due to the very few hours of Japanese class provided in high school compared to full time studies at a university or a language school, for instance.

The Japanese informants were Japanese nationals residing either in Sweden or Japan. A few participants were half-Japanese, but had grown up in Japan and were fluent in Japanese.

3.4.3 Background variables

In the beginning of the questionnaire, background information regarding the Swedish informants' gender, previous exposure to (varieties of) the Japanese language, and self-perceived proficiency in Japanese was collected. These factors proved to be significant in the case of Japanese learners' attitudes towards English speech varieties (McKenzie 2006). A question about how often the informants watch anime, drama or films in the Japanese language was also included. Two variables were controlled: firstly, the participants were all required to currently be studying or to previously have studied Japanese. Secondly, all participants should have Swedish as their native language.

The Japanese informants were asked about their gender, prefecture of origin and frequency of watching Japanese language anime, drama or film.

3.4.4 Speech evaluation

As described previously, the informants were provided with ten audio clips of telephone conversations in Japanese, which they were to listen to. They were allowed to listen to each clip

as many times as they liked. They were also asked to focus on the speech itself, rather than the content of the conversation.

The informants were then to state how they perceived the speech in the audio clip, by filling in a semantic-differential scale. The scale was adapted from McKenzie's (2006) 7-point scale, which contained eight adjectives and their opposites. Since the present study is relatively limited, however, it was decided to use a 5-point scale instead, and to only pick five out of the eight adjectives. The positive and negative traits were randomised on the left and right sides of the scale "in order to avoid any left-right bias amongst the informants" (McKenzie 2006:109). The scale is provided in the figure below.

Figure 1 The semantic-differential scale used in the study

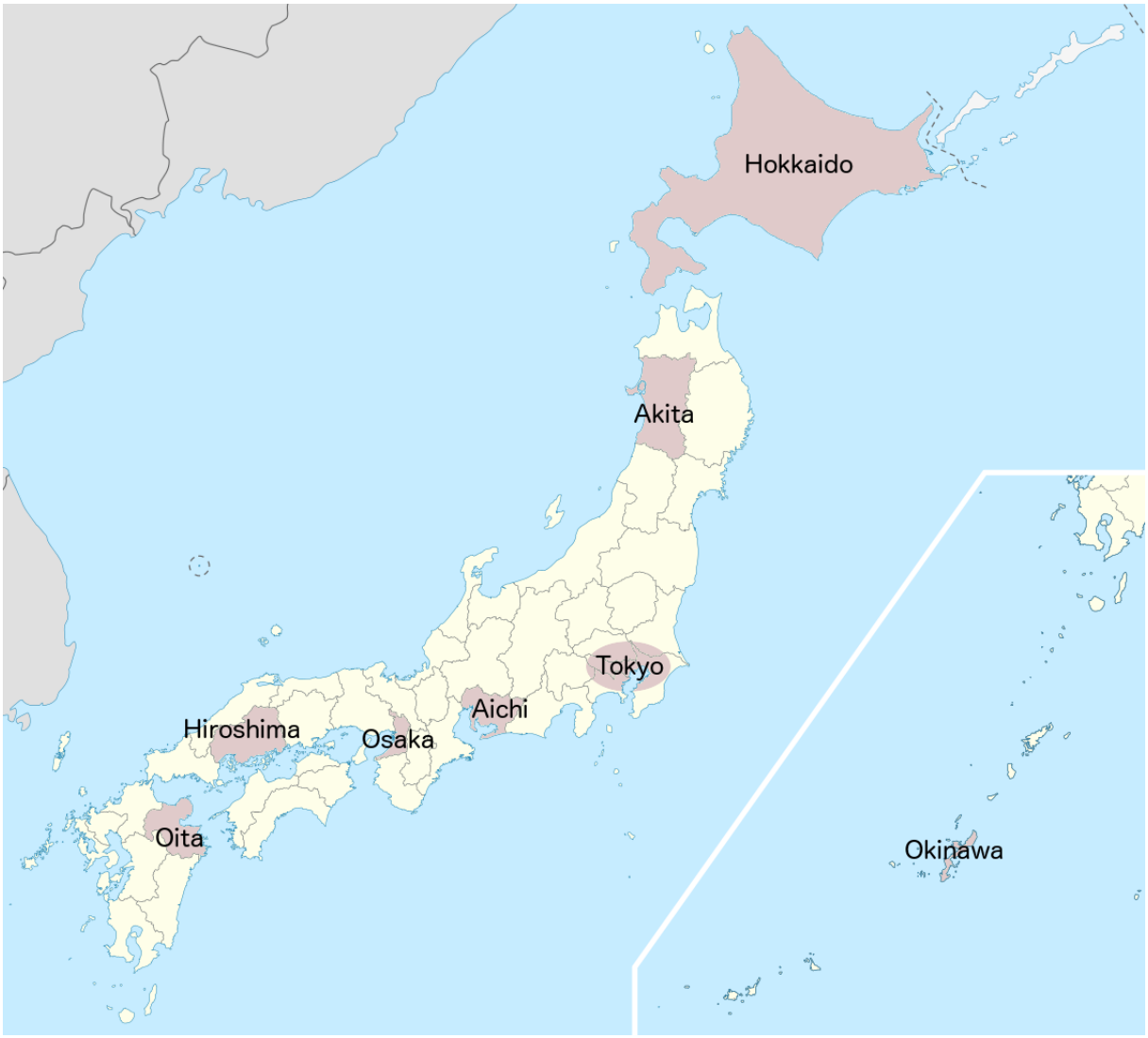
pleasant	1	2	3	4	5	not pleasant
clear	1	2	3	4	5	unclear
not gentle	1	2	3	4	5	gentle
funny	1	2	3	4	5	not funny
not intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	intelligent

3.4.5 Dialect identification

To find out if the informants could correctly identify the speech in the audio clips, they were asked to choose which dialect they thought was being spoken from a list of dialects. In addition to the five dialects represented in the survey, Hokkaido, Okinawa and Osaka were also provided as options, along with a 'don't know' option. The additional options were selected to represent the remaining dialect regions that were not part of the audio clips. However, I chose not to include a Shikoku option, in favour of dividing the Kyushu & Okinawa group and providing an Okinawa option. Research has shown that people who cannot identify a speech variety often misidentify it as a variety they are more familiar with (McKenzie 2006). From my personal understanding, Okinawa is for Swedes a more well-known dialectal region than Shikoku, and the speech of Okinawans is perceived as being unintelligible. (This was indeed confirmed by a Swedish informant who said after completing the questionnaire that she chose to answer Okinawa on audio clips she found especially unclear.) In the same way, including Osaka (Kansai region) in the options was of interest, as Osaka dialect is generally seen as the one of the most well-known dialects in Japan (e.g. Long 1999), and so it was assumed that many Swedish informants were familiar with it.

As some informants may not know where all the options are located geographically, but still may be able to recognise a dialect as being southern, for instance, a map of Japan with all options marked out was provided as an aid in the selection process, as seen below.

Figure 2 Map of Japan with dialect options marked out



At the end of the questionnaire, informants were allowed to write a comment if they wished to do so.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Overview

In chapter 4, the results from the questionnaire are presented. First, a description of the informants is provided.

4.2 Description of informants

As detailed previously (see section 3.4.2), the participants in the Swedish questionnaire were all studying or had studied Japanese, and had Swedish as their native language.

In total, 51 responses to the Swedish questionnaire were collected. However, a number of responses were excluded from the results due to the informant having sent in a double response, not having studied Japanese or not having Swedish as their native language. The final number of responses used in the study was 45.

30 informants (66,67%) were female; 15 informants (33,33%) were male.

Nine informants (20,00%) had studied Japanese for less than one year, seven (15,56%) had studied for about one year, 17 (15,56%) for about two years, and twelve informants (15,56%) had studied for three years or more.

Twelve informants (26,67%) perceived themselves as beginners of Japanese, 26 informants (57,78%) said they were good at Japanese, while seven (15,56%) said they were very good.

Only one of the informants (2,22%) watched Japanese language anime, drama or film less than once a year. Eight people (17,78%) watched at least once a year, 13 (28,89%) at least once a month. The majority, 23 informants (51,11%), watched least once a week.

34 participants (75,56%) reported that they had been to Japan, while eleven participants (24,44%) had not been to Japan. Out of those who had been to Japan, 14 people had been there for a total period of less than three months. Ten informants had spent 3–12 months there; the remaining ten had been there for more than 12 months. It should be noted that while most of the informants who had spent more than 12 months in Japan had lived there for one to three years, one person had lived there for seven years, and one for 17 years. In the answers to where in Japan the informants had been, all major regions of Japan except Tohoku were represented.

The majority of the informants had visited or lived in the Tokyo area. The Kansai region was also a popular destination, as well as the Chubu region.

In the Japanese questionnaire, 48 responses were collected. Again, however, a number of responses were removed. One of the informants stated Skåne (Sweden) as their home prefecture, which disqualified them, as it was required that the informants had grown up in Japan. Furthermore, there was seemingly some technical trouble for one informant, as twelve responses were exactly identical and sent in at the same time. All of these responses save one were discarded. The final number of responses used in the study was 35.

30 informants (85,71%) were female, and 5 informants (14,29%) were male.

The majority of the informants (23 out of 35, 65,71%) had their origin in prefectures in the Kanto region, with 15 informants (42,86%) coming from Tokyo alone. The other informants came from the Tohoku, Chubu, Kansai and Kyushu & Okinawa regions. There were no informants from the Hokkaido, Chugoku and Shikoku regions.

Two informants (5,71%) said that they watched Japanese language media less than once a year, four (11,43%) watched at least once a year, and seven (20%) at least once a month. The majority, 22 informants (62,86%), watched it at least once a week.

4.3 Results of the speech evaluations

As mentioned previously (see section 3.4.4), the positive and negative traits were randomly positioned on the semantic-differential scale, i.e. the positive adjective was sometimes on the left side and sometimes on the right. When analysing the results of the speech evaluations, some of the scores were inverted, so that a score of one would always reflect the most negative rating, and a score of five the most positive rating.

In the table below, the average ratings of each audio clip from the Japanese informants are presented. The audio clips are ordered according to the dialects' geographical location in Japan, from West to East, with the old speakers placed before the young speakers.

Table 1 Japanese informants' average speech evaluations: individual audio clips

Trait	Speakers									
	8: Oita, old	1: Oita, young	5: Hiroshima, old	4: Hiroshima, young	2: Aichi, old	7: Aichi, young	10: Tokyo, old	3: Tokyo, young	9: Akita, old	6: Akita, young
Pleasant	2,91	3,46	3,24	3,09	3,23	3,09	3,21	3,34	2,77	3,26
Clear	2,15	3,63	2,68	2,80	3,11	3,80	3,77	4,34	2,46	3,60
Gentle	3,15	3,60	3,74	3,43	3,51	2,97	3,41	3,23	3,11	3,31
Funny	2,24	1,77	2,21	2,29	2,34	2,09	2,00	1,69	2,46	2,14
Intelligent	2,71	3,17	3,00	3,06	2,89	2,94	3,21	3,49	2,74	3,34

In general, the Japanese informants' average ratings were quite neutral, centring around the middle score of three. The trait that had the largest differences in attitudes was 'clear', on which the old Oita speech had the lowest rating at 2,15 and the young Tokyo speech had the highest at 4,34. The 'funny' trait also had some variation, with a difference of 1,59 points between the lowest (Tokyo, young) and the highest rating (Akita, old). However, what is most noticeable regarding this trait is that the ratings are consistently lower than for the rest of the traits. This could be explained in different ways. In McKenzie's (2006) study, 'funny' was categorised as a trait related to social attractiveness or solidarity, i.e. a positive trait. This might not necessarily be how the informants in the present survey interpreted this trait – it is possible that they rather negatively associated it with ridicule, and therefore were less willing to give high ratings on this scale. Another possible explanation is that the content of the conversations simply was not considered funny by the informants.

The only average rating above four was the 'clear' rating for the young Tokyo speakers, which was 4,34.

The Swedish informants' average ratings of the audio clips are presented in the table below.

Table 2 Swedish informants' average speech evaluations: individual audio clips

Trait	Speakers									
	8: Oita, old	1: Oita, young	5: Hiroshima, old	4: Hiroshima, young	2: Aichi, old	7: Aichi, young	10: Tokyo, old	3: Tokyo, young	9: Akita, old	6: Akita, young
Pleasant	2,67	3,33	3,09	2,87	3,20	3,00	3,64	3,71	2,87	3,42
Clear	1,51	3,02	2,31	2,31	2,40	3,27	3,82	4,22	1,89	3,78
Gentle	3,00	3,76	3,60	3,53	3,60	3,24	3,73	3,51	3,18	3,49
Funny	2,93	2,82	2,89	2,96	3,04	3,00	3,09	2,60	3,18	2,76
Intelligent	2,64	2,78	2,69	3,02	2,78	2,96	3,44	3,58	2,78	3,33

Like the Japanese informants, the Swedish generally did not show any strongly differing opinions towards the speakers in the different audio clips. Most ratings were fairly close to the middle value of three, which must be considered a neutral opinion.

The greatest variation in evaluations could again be found within the ‘clear’ trait. The old Oita speech was considered very unclear (1,51); on the contrary, the young Tokyo speech was very clear (4,22). On the ‘gentle’ trait, no rating was below three. The only average rating above four was the ‘clear’ rating for the young Tokyo speakers, which was 4,22.

The young Tokyo speech received the highest rating on the ‘pleasant’, ‘clear’ and ‘intelligent’ traits, while it had the lowest rating on the ‘funny’ trait. On the other hand, the old Tokyo speakers had the second highest ratings on all traits, including ‘funny’. This is an interesting contrast between the two Tokyo speech samples, but also between the Japanese and the Swedish ratings: while the Japanese informants rated both Tokyo conversations low on the ‘funny’ trait, the Swedish rated the young speakers low and the old speakers high.

The old Oita speakers were rated the least favourably on all traits except ‘funny’. In contrast, the evaluations for the ‘gentle’ trait were interestingly the highest for the young Oita speakers.

Comparing the Swedish results with the Japanese, they are quite similar, although the Swedish ratings generally varied slightly more. Moreover, the Swedish informants perceived all speakers as funnier than the Japanese informants did.

The tables above presented the ratings for each audio clip individually. In order to get a clearer picture of potential differences in evaluations between the five dialects, the average ratings of the two audio clips of each dialect were analysed together, as illustrated in the tables below.

Table 3 Japanese informants' average speech evaluations: dialects

Trait	Speakers					
	Oita	Hiroshima	Aichi	Tokyo	Akita	All
Pleasant	3,19	3,16	3,16	3,28	3,01	3,16
Clear	2,90	2,74	3,46	4,06	3,03	3,24
Gentle	3,38	3,58	3,24	3,32	3,21	3,35
Funny	2,00	2,25	2,21	1,84	2,30	2,12
Intelligent	2,94	3,03	2,91	3,35	3,04	3,05
All	2,88	2,95	3,00	3,17	2,92	2,98

As shown in the table, Tokyo dialect was perceived as both the most pleasant, clear and intelligent dialect. Especially on the 'clear' trait, the Tokyo speakers had a much higher rating than the other dialects. On the other hand, the rating for the 'funny' trait was the lowest of all dialects.

The ratings on pleasantness for all dialects were quite neutral, with an average at 3,16, although Tokyo dialect received the highest one out of them, and Akita the lowest. As seen in the previous tables, there were big differences on the 'clear' trait, with Tokyo and Aichi being seen as clear, and Hiroshima and Oita as unclear. All dialects were above the rating three on gentleness, but Hiroshima stands out as being the most gentle. No dialect was considered funny; the average was 2,12, with Tokyo having the lowest rating at 1,84, and Akita the highest at 2,30. All dialects had a fairly neutral rating on intelligence, but Oita and Aichi were slightly below three, and Tokyo differed from the rest with 3,35.

Looking at the average ratings of all traits for each dialect, we have the following ranking: Tokyo was rated the most favourably, followed by Aichi, Hiroshima, Akita, and lastly, Oita.

Table 4 Swedish informants' average speech evaluations: dialects

Trait	Speakers					
	Oita	Hiroshima	Aichi	Tokyo	Akita	All
Pleasant	3,00	2,98	3,10	3,68	3,14	3,18
Clear	2,27	2,31	2,83	4,02	2,83	2,85
Gentle	3,38	3,57	3,42	3,62	3,33	3,46
Funny	2,88	2,92	3,02	2,84	2,97	2,93
Intelligent	2,71	2,86	2,87	3,51	3,06	3,00
All	2,85	2,93	3,05	3,53	3,07	3,08

In general, the Swedish informants demonstrated similar attitudes to the dialects to those of the Japanese informants. There were some differences worth noting, however.

Firstly, Tokyo dialect was perceived even more favourably by the Swedes than by the Japanese.

Secondly, the dialects were considered much less clear by the Swedes than the Japanese; compare the average 2,85 to the Japanese 3,24. Only Tokyo dialect had a similarly high rating in both groups.

Thirdly, the Swedish informants gave remarkably higher ratings on the 'funny' trait than the Japanese: compare the Swedish range 2,88–3,02 to the Japanese 1,84–2,30. Aichi dialect was considered the funniest by the Swedes, rather than Akita dialect, although the differences between the two were small.

Fourthly, with the exception of Tokyo dialect, the dialects were generally rated lower on intelligence. It is possible that this difference is due to the Swedish informants not being able to understand the speech as well as the native Japanese.

The Swedes' ranking of the dialects is the following: Tokyo, Akita, Aichi, Hiroshima, and Oita. The most favourable and least favourable ranking is same as in the Japanese ranking; however, the order of the Hiroshima, Aichi and Akita dialects differs. While Aichi was slightly more favoured than Hiroshima and Akita by the Japanese informants, the Swedish informants preferred Akita and Aichi over Hiroshima.

The audio clips were also categorised by the age of the speakers. The results from this analysis are seen in the tables below.

Table 5 Japanese informants' average speech evaluations: age of speakers

Trait	Speakers	
	Old speakers	Young speakers
Pleasant	3,07	3,25
Clear	2,83	3,63
Gentle	3,38	3,31
Funny	2,25	1,99
Intelligent	2,91	3,20

From the table above, it can be seen that the Japanese informants perceived the old speakers as funnier and slightly gentler than the young speakers. On the other traits, the rating for the young speakers surpassed those for the old speakers. Especially on the 'clear' trait, a distinct difference was found between the two groups, where the young speech was perceived as much clearer.

Table 6 Swedish informants' average speech evaluations: age of speakers

Trait	Speakers	
	Old speakers	Young speakers
Pleasant	3,09	3,27
Clear	2,39	3,32
Gentle	3,42	3,51
Funny	3,03	2,83
Intelligent	2,87	3,13

Similarly to the Japanese, the Swedish informants generally perceived the old speakers as funnier than the young speakers. On all other traits, the young speakers were rated higher than the old speakers. Just as in the Japanese results, there was a particularly large difference between the 'clear' ratings of the young and the old speakers.

4.3.1 Effects of background variables on speech evaluations

In this section, the results of analyses that were made according to various background variables of the Swedish informants are presented.

The table below shows the male and female informants' evaluations of each of the audio clips.

Table 7 Swedish informants' average speech evaluations according to gender

Speakers	Gender of informants	Pleasant	Clear	Gentle	Funny	Intelligent
8: Oita, old	male	2,67	1,60	2,67	3,13	2,60
	female	2,67	1,47	3,16	2,83	2,67
1: Oita, young	male	3,27	3,40	3,73	2,87	2,67
	female	3,37	2,83	3,77	2,80	2,83
5: Hiroshima,	male	2,93	2,53	3,53	2,80	2,47
old	female	3,17	2,20	3,63	2,93	2,80
4: Hiroshima,	male	2,80	2,47	3,47	3,07	3,00
young	female	2,90	2,23	3,57	2,90	3,03
2: Aichi, old	male	3,27	2,67	3,47	3,07	2,73
	female	3,17	2,27	3,67	3,03	2,80
7: Aichi,	male	3,20	3,20	3,13	3,07	2,93
young	female	2,90	3,30	3,30	2,97	2,97
10: Tokyo, old	male	3,73	4,20	3,47	3,20	3,33
	female	3,60	3,63	3,87	3,03	3,50
3: Tokyo,	male	3,47	4,00	3,47	2,80	3,40
young	female	3,83	4,33	3,53	2,50	3,67
9: Akita, old	male	2,93	1,80	3,33	3,20	2,60
	female	2,93	1,93	3,10	3,17	2,87
6: Akita,	male	3,20	3,53	3,33	2,80	3,27
young	female	3,53	3,90	3,57	2,73	3,37

A few differences between the male and female informants were found. The female informants tended to rate the speakers higher on the 'gentle' trait than the male informants did (the exception was the old Akita speech). Moreover, they consistently rated the speakers higher on intelligence than the males. On the other hand, the male informants tended to rate the speakers higher on the 'funny' trait than the female informants. Furthermore, the female informants rated the young Tokyo and young Akita speakers higher than the males on all traits except 'funny'.

No noteworthy patterns according to the duration of Japanese studies were found. However, some potential effects of the informants' level of self-perceived proficiency in Japanese were discovered. The results from this analysis are presented below.

Table 8 Swedish informants' average speech evaluations according to self-perceived proficiency in Japanese

Speakers	Self-perceived proficiency	Pleasant	Clear	Gentle	Funny	Intelligent
8: Oita, old	beginner	2,50	1,58	3,33	3,00	3,25
	good	2,65	1,39	2,89	3,04	2,39
	very good	3,00	1,86	2,86	2,43	2,57
1: Oita, young	beginner	3,50	3,00	3,83	2,92	3,17
	good	3,27	2,89	3,77	2,81	2,65
	very good	3,29	3,57	3,57	2,71	2,57
5: Hiroshima, old	beginner	3,00	2,25	3,67	2,75	2,83
	good	3,04	2,12	3,58	2,96	2,58
	very good	3,43	3,14	3,57	2,86	2,86
4: Hiroshima, young	beginner	3,08	1,92	3,67	3,42	3,17
	good	2,73	2,42	3,42	2,81	3,12
	very good	3,00	2,57	3,71	2,71	2,43
2: Aichi, old	beginner	3,17	2,08	3,58	3,33	2,67
	good	3,08	2,46	3,58	3,08	2,77
	very good	3,71	2,71	3,71	2,43	3,00
7: Aichi, young	beginner	2,83	3,25	3,08	2,67	3,00
	good	3,04	3,19	3,23	3,27	3,00
	very good	3,14	3,57	3,57	2,57	2,71
10: Tokyo, old	beginner	3,75	3,58	4,00	3,17	3,42
	good	3,58	3,89	3,58	3,00	3,50
	very good	3,71	4,00	3,86	3,29	3,29
3: Tokyo, young	beginner	3,83	3,67	3,25	2,50	3,42
	good	3,62	4,39	3,65	2,65	3,65
	very good	3,86	4,57	3,43	2,57	3,57
9: Akita, old	beginner	2,58	1,67	3,25	2,92	3,08
	good	2,89	1,92	3,19	3,27	2,62
	very good	3,29	2,14	3,00	3,29	2,86
6: Akita, young	beginner	3,25	3,08	3,50	2,75	3,25
	good	3,46	3,92	3,46	2,69	3,27
	very good	3,57	4,43	3,57	3,00	3,71

The informants who rated their own proficiency of Japanese as very good consistently rated speakers higher on the 'clear' trait than the less proficient informants. It is likely that this is because they could understand more of the content of the speech, or because they could

distinguish the words easier than the other informants could. They also tended to rate old speakers higher on pleasantness than the less proficient informants. Again, it may be related to their better understanding of the speech content.

On the other hand, all old speakers except those from Aichi were rated most favourably on gentleness by the beginner informants. One Swedish informant commented that she thought elder male Japanese speakers often sounded very "cute" to her, even if she did not understand what they were saying. If this opinion should be held by other informants as well, one could speculate that this is the reason why the beginner informants thought the old speakers to be gentler than the more proficient informants did, who might have been more influenced by the content of the speech.

Another finding was that on the 'intelligence' trait, the young Oita, Hiroshima and Aichi speakers all received their highest rating from the beginner informants, and their lowest rating from the very good informants.

The speech evaluations were also analysed according to how often the informants watched anime, drama or film in Japanese. As only one informant watched Japanese language media less than once a year, and this was thought to be too small a number to be comparable to the other groups, this informant was added to the group who watched Japanese media at least once a year (but less than once a month), to form a 'less than once a month' group, containing nine informants. The average ratings according to frequency of consumption of Japanese language media are found in the table below.

Table 9 Swedish informants' average speech evaluations according to consumption of Japanese media

Speakers	Frequency of media consumption	Pleasant	Clear	Gentle	Funny	Intelligent
8: Oita, old	< once a month	2,89	1,78	3,22	2,78	2,89
	≥ once a month	3,00	1,46	3,08	2,77	2,54
	≥ once a week	2,39	1,44	2,87	3,09	2,61
1: Oita, young	< once a month	3,78	3,33	3,67	2,67	3,33
	≥ once a month	3,31	2,77	3,54	2,77	2,77
	≥ once a week	3,17	3,04	3,91	2,91	2,57
5: Hiroshima, old	< once a month	3,00	2,00	3,33	2,78	2,89
	≥ once a month	3,46	2,46	3,92	3,23	2,85
	≥ once a week	2,91	2,35	3,52	2,74	2,52
4: Hiroshima, young	< once a month	2,33	2,00	3,00	2,67	3,11
	≥ once a month	2,92	2,54	3,77	2,85	3,08
	≥ once a week	3,04	2,30	3,61	3,13	2,96
2: Aichi, old	< once a month	3,33	2,33	3,67	2,67	3,22
	≥ once a month	3,39	2,77	3,77	3,23	2,92
	≥ once a week	3,04	2,22	3,48	3,09	2,52
7: Aichi, young	< once a month	2,56	3,22	3,11	2,56	3,22
	≥ once a month	3,25	3,77	3,39	3,08	3,15
	≥ once a week	3,04	3,00	3,22	3,13	2,74
10: Tokyo, old	< once a month	3,44	3,33	3,78	3,11	3,67
	≥ once a month	3,62	3,92	3,62	2,92	3,23
	≥ once a week	3,74	3,96	3,78	3,17	3,48
3: Tokyo, young	< once a month	3,56	3,78	3,78	2,56	4,00
	≥ once a month	3,69	4,54	3,62	2,46	3,62
	≥ once a week	3,78	4,22	3,35	2,70	3,39
9: Akita, old	< once a month	3,22	1,89	3,22	3,00	3,22
	≥ once a month	3,08	1,92	3,00	3,15	2,69
	≥ once a week	2,61	1,87	3,26	3,26	2,65
6: Akita, young	< once a month	3,22	3,67	3,56	2,78	3,33
	≥ once a month	3,23	3,77	3,39	2,92	3,23
	≥ once a week	3,61	3,83	3,52	2,65	3,39

A number of interesting differences between the groups were found. Firstly, with the exception of the old Tokyo speakers, the informants who watched Japanese media at least once a week rated old speakers lower on the 'pleasant' trait than the informants who did not watch

Japanese media as often, whereas the informants who watched Japanese media less than once a month generally gave lower ratings to the young speakers. One speculation is that those informants who frequently consume Japanese media value Tokyo dialect/standard Japanese higher than those who do not, due to the dominance of this speech variety in the media.

Secondly, the group who watched Japanese media less than once a month also tended to rate dialects lower on the 'funny' trait than the rest of the informants, while those who watched at least once a week tended to rate them higher. It is difficult to speculate about these results, but it is possibly due to the frequent media consumers associating the speech with the Japanese language entertainment they watch.

Thirdly, all speakers except the young Akita speakers received the highest ratings on intelligence from the 'less than once a month' informants. In contrast, the 'at least once a week' informants tended to rate speakers lower on intelligence.

Next, the Swedish informants' previous exposure to Japanese varieties was analysed. It was of interest to investigate whether Swedes who had lived in the region where a dialect was spoken had adopted similar attitudes towards the local dialect as the native speakers there. Therefore, a summary of the Japanese informants' evaluations of their own regional dialects will first be presented.

Two of the Japanese informants were from Kyushu (Fukuoka and Kagoshima). They had considerably more positive perceptions of the Oita speech than the rest of the informants did; all traits were rated higher (between 3,75 and 4,75), except 'funny', which was rated lower (1,50).

Six people were from the Chubu region (Aichi, Fukui, Shizuoka and Toyama). These informants showed the same tendency as the Kyushu informants did, and rated the Aichi speech higher on all traits (3,25–3,67) except 'funny', which was rated lower (2,00).

The 23 informants from the Kanto region (Chiba, Ibaraki, Kanagawa, Saitama, Tochigi and Tokyo) also showed more positive attitudes towards Tokyo speech than the rest of the informants, but the differences were not as distinct as was the case with the other dialects. Furthermore, in contrast to the other groups the Kanto informants did rate their own dialect as funnier, but instead, they rated it slightly lower on the 'clear' trait. This could possibly be because they perceive more variation within their own speech variety; others may only see the Tokyo dialect as prestigious, clear but not funny, while the Kanto natives may have thought the particular speakers in the survey were funnier and less clear than average.

Three informants came from the Tohoku region (Akita and Miyagi). Intriguingly, their results were shown to be the exact opposite of the tendency found with the other dialects: the

Tohoku informants rated the Akita dialect lower on all traits except 'funny', which was rated higher. The rating on intelligence was especially striking: 2,17 compared to the non-Tohoku informants' 3,13. These findings are consistent with the previous research on the stigmatisation of Tohoku dialect (Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith 2016).

As no informants had Chugoku origin, Hiroshima dialect could not be analysed in this aspect.

Excepting Tokyo, the numbers of informants from the respective regions were unfortunately quite small. Therefore, it is difficult to say if the results are in fact representative or not.

As detailed previously (see section 4.2), eleven of the Swedish informants had never been to Japan, while 14 informants had visited Japan for a total period of less than three months, ten had lived there for 3–12 months, and another ten had lived there for longer than 12 months. The speech evaluations were analysed according to these groups, and are presented in the table below.

Table 10 Swedish informants' average speech evaluations according to length of time spent in Japan

Speakers	Time spent in Japan	Pleasant	Clear	Gentle	Funny	Intelligent
8: Oita, old	none	2,55	1,55	3,18	2,91	3,18
	< 3 months	2,36	1,43	2,79	3,21	2,43
	3–12 months	2,80	1,10	3,40	3,10	2,40
	> 12 months	3,10	2,00	2,70	2,40	2,60
1: Oita, young	none	3,46	3,00	3,91	2,73	3,18
	< 3 months	3,36	3,00	3,79	2,79	2,86
	3–12 months	3,20	2,70	3,70	3,00	2,30
	> 12 months	3,30	3,40	3,60	2,80	2,70
5: Hiroshima, old	none	2,91	2,18	3,55	2,55	2,82
	< 3 months	2,93	2,21	3,64	3,29	2,43
	3–12 months	3,20	2,30	3,60	2,80	2,60
	> 12 months	3,40	2,60	3,60	2,80	3,00
4: Hiroshima, young	none	3,00	2,18	3,73	2,82	3,27
	< 3 months	2,86	2,43	3,43	3,21	3,29
	3–12 months	3,00	2,40	3,60	2,80	2,80
	> 12 months	2,60	2,20	3,40	2,90	2,60
2: Aichi, old	none	2,82	2,00	3,55	3,46	2,91

	< 3 months	3,07	2,36	3,43	3,14	2,71
	3–12 months	3,10	2,40	3,70	2,80	2,50
	> 12 months	3,90	2,90	3,80	2,70	3,00
7: Aichi, young	none	2,91	3,27	2,73	2,73	3,27
	< 3 months	2,85	3,14	3,00	3,29	2,64
	3–12 months	3,10	3,20	3,90	3,30	3,00
	> 12 months	3,20	3,50	3,50	2,60	3,00
10: Tokyo, old	none	3,73	3,55	3,64	3,37	3,27
	< 3 months	3,64	3,71	3,64	3,00	3,57
	3–12 months	3,50	4,10	3,90	3,10	3,60
	> 12 months	3,70	4,00	3,80	2,90	3,30
3: Tokyo, young	none	4,09	4,09	3,73	2,46	3,73
	< 3 months	3,07	3,57	2,86	2,64	3,14
	3–12 months	3,80	4,70	3,80	2,80	3,70
	> 12 months	4,10	4,80	3,90	2,50	3,90
9: Akita, old	none	2,46	2,09	3,27	3,09	3,09
	< 3 months	2,71	1,57	2,93	3,00	2,57
	3–12 months	3,10	1,80	3,70	3,50	2,60
	> 12 months	3,30	2,20	2,90	3,20	2,90
6: Akita, young	none	3,36	3,46	3,46	2,27	3,27
	< 3 months	3,14	3,36	3,00	2,86	3,21
	3–12 months	3,70	4,10	3,90	3,10	3,10
	> 12 months	3,60	4,40	3,80	2,80	3,80

As can be seen in the table above, the informants who had spent more than 12 months in Japan did, with one exception (young Hiroshima speakers), consistently rate the speakers higher on the 'clear' trait than the other groups did. This is likely due to longer exposure to the language making it easier to understand the speech. However, the opposite was not true – the informants who had never been to Japan did not always give the lowest ratings on 'clear'.

The speech evaluations of the Swedish informants who had lived in one area of Japan for at least three months were compared to those of the informants who had not lived there.

Two informants had spent 12 months in Kyushu (Fukuoka). Unlike the Japanese informants from Kyushu, they rated the Oita speech slightly lower than the rest of the informants on the 'pleasant', 'clear' and 'intelligent' traits, while they gave slightly higher 'gentle' and 'funny' ratings.

Five people had spent 3–12 months in Chubu (Nagoya and Gifu). These informants rated the Aichi dialect considerably higher on the 'pleasant', 'clear' and 'gentle' traits than the other

informants, while they rated it lower on 'funny'. 'Intelligent' only got a marginally higher rating. These results show the same tendency as the Chubu natives' did.

Ten people had lived for 3 months–17 years in the Kanto region (Tokyo, Yokohama, and Kanagawa). Like the Japanese informants with Kanto origin, they rated the Tokyo speech slightly higher than the other informants on four traits. However, whereas the Japanese rated their dialect slightly lower on the 'clear' trait, the Swedes rated it significantly higher.

Hiroshima dialect and Akita dialect were not analysed, since no informants had lived in those regions.

4.4 Results of dialect identifications

In this section, the results from the identification task will be presented.

4.4.1 Recognition rates

In the tables below, the percentages of correct and incorrect identifications of each audio clip, made by the Japanese and Swedish informants respectively, are presented.

Table 11 Japanese informants' percentages of correct and incorrect identifications of audio clips

Identi-fication	Speakers									
	8: Oita, old	1: Oita, young	5: Hiro-shima, old	4: Hiro-shima, young	2: Aichi, old	7: Aichi, young	10: Tokyo, old	3: Tokyo, young	9: Akita, old	6: Akita, young
Correct	17,14% (N=6)	17,14% (N=6)	20,00% (N=7)	20,00% (N=7)	22,86% (N=8)	25,71% (N=9)	40,00% (N=14)	97,14% (N=34)	40,00% (N=14)	0,00% (N=0)
Incorrect	82,86% (N=29)	82,86% (N=29)	80,00% (N=28)	80,00% (N=28)	77,14% (N=27)	74,29% (N=26)	60,00% (N=21)	2,86% (N=1)	60,00% (N=21)	100,00% (N=35)

With the exception of the young Tokyo speakers, which all but one of the informants identified correctly, all audio clips proved to be unexpectedly difficult to identify. The second most frequently identified speakers were the old Tokyo speakers and the old Akita speakers, which 40% of the informants got correct. Curiously, not a single informant could accurately identify the young Akita speakers.

Table 12 Swedish informants' percentages of correct and incorrect identifications of audio clips

Identi-fication	Speakers									
	8: Oita, old	1: Oita, young	5: Hiro-shima, old	4: Hiro-shima, young	2: Aichi, old	7: Aichi, young	10: Tokyo, old	3: Tokyo, young	9: Akita, old	6: Akita, young
Correct	11,11% (N=5)	4,44% (N=2)	6,67% (N=3)	6,67% (N=3)	8,89% (N=4)	6,67% (N=3)	13,33% (N=6)	71,11% (N=32)	6,67% (N=3)	2,22% (N=1)
Incorrect	88,89% (N=40)	95,56% (N=43)	93,33% (N=42)	93,33% (N=42)	91,11% (N=41)	93,33% (N=42)	86,67% (N=39)	28,89 (N=13)	93,33% (N=42)	97,78% (N=44)

It is evident from the above table that the Swedish informants found it even more difficult than the Japanese to identify the dialects. 71,11% could identify the young Tokyo speakers, but the second most commonly identified audio clip, the old Tokyo speech, had a recognition rate at a mere 13,33%.

Due to these results, it is necessary to look further into which options were selected instead of the correct ones. In the figures below, the guesses for each of the audio clips are presented. The results for the ten audio clips are grouped by dialect and discussed together.

Figure 3 Japanese informants' guesses of dialect: young Oita speakers

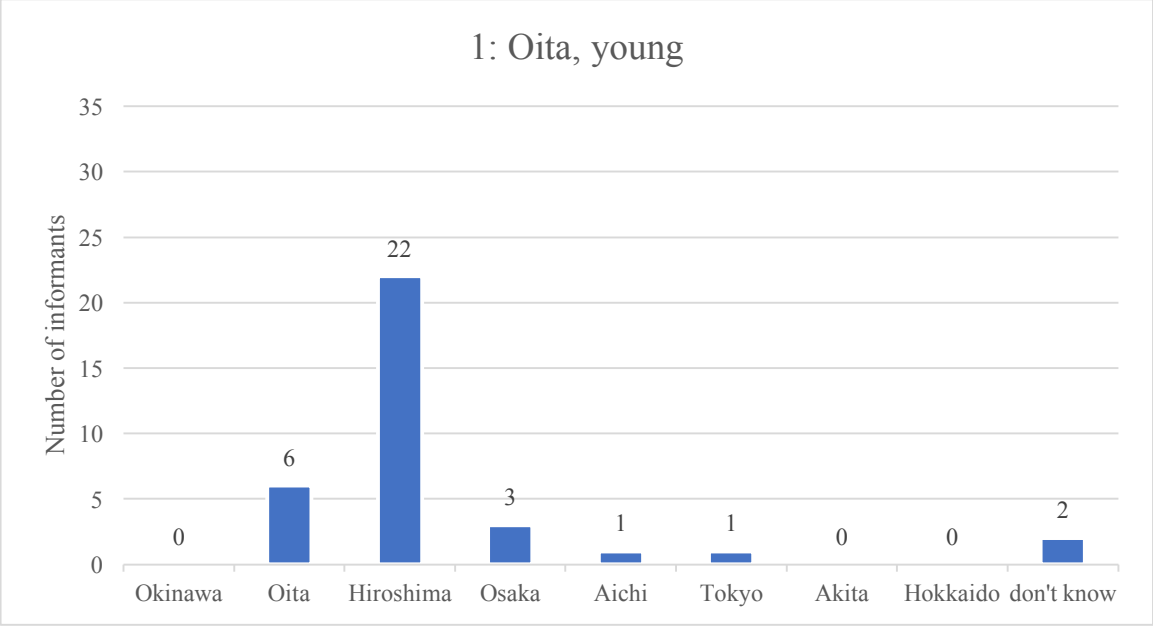
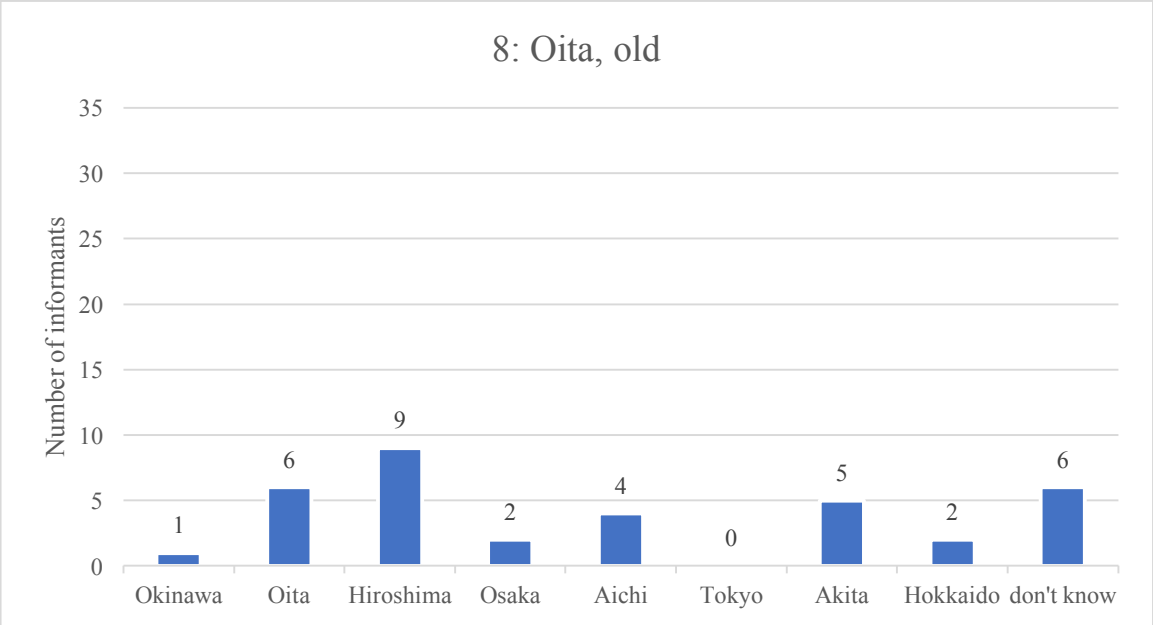


Figure 4 Japanese informants' guesses of dialect: old Oita speakers



Both the young and old Oita speakers had six correct identifications. What is most interesting about these results is that the most common guess for both audio clips was Hiroshima; in the case of the young speakers the overwhelming majority of the informants made this misidentification.

Figure 5 Japanese informants' guesses of dialect: young Hiroshima speakers

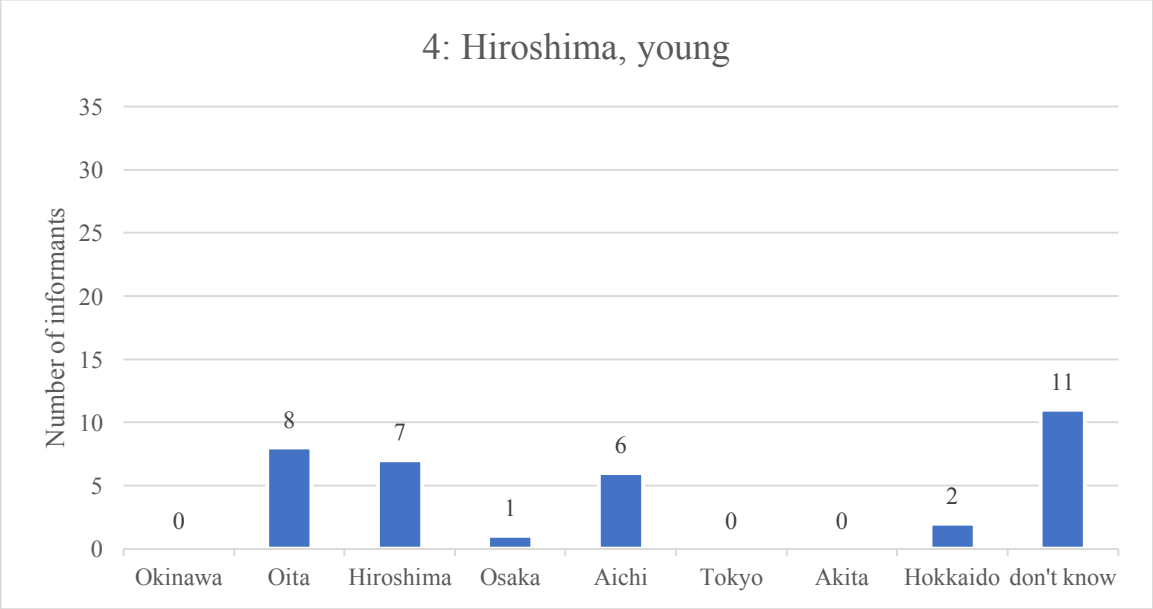
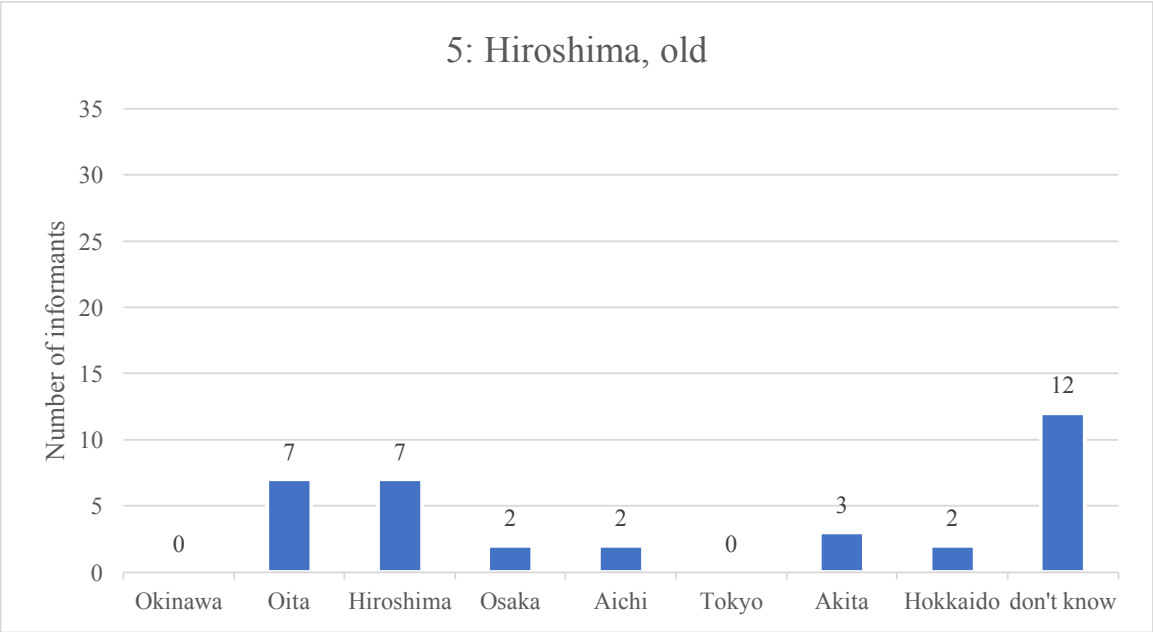


Figure 6 Japanese informants' guesses of dialect: old Hiroshima speakers



The Hiroshima dialect was identified by seven people on both audio clips, while as many people misidentified it as Oita dialect. Taking the results for the Oita speech into consideration, this suggests a general difficulty among informants to discern between Oita and Hiroshima dialect. The number of people who said they did not know was also large for this dialect.

Figure 7 Japanese informants' guesses of dialect: young Aichi speakers

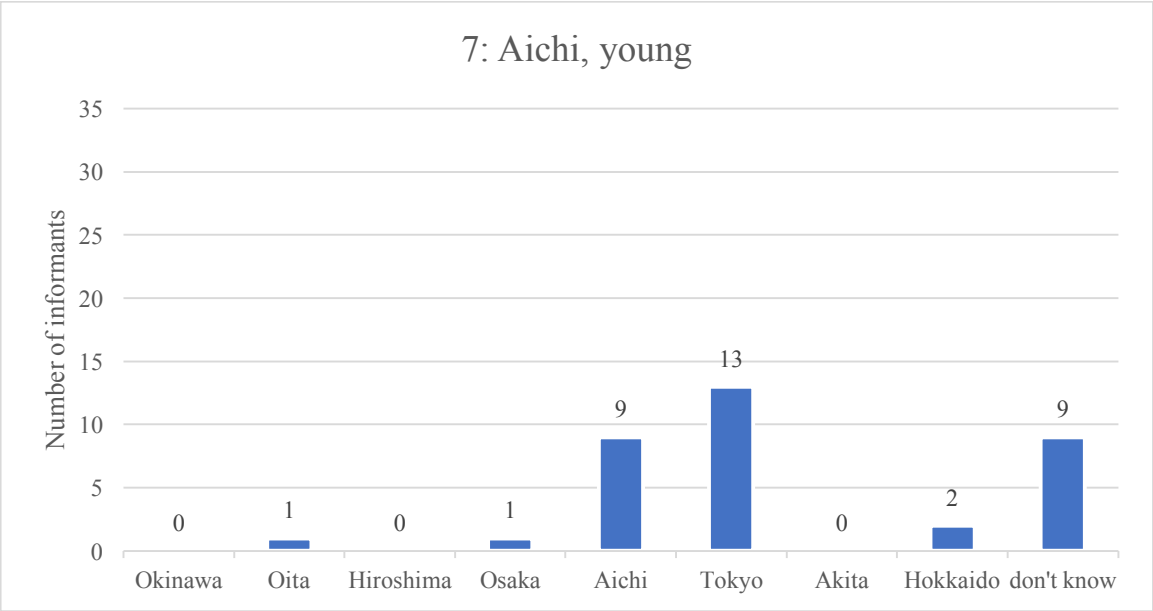
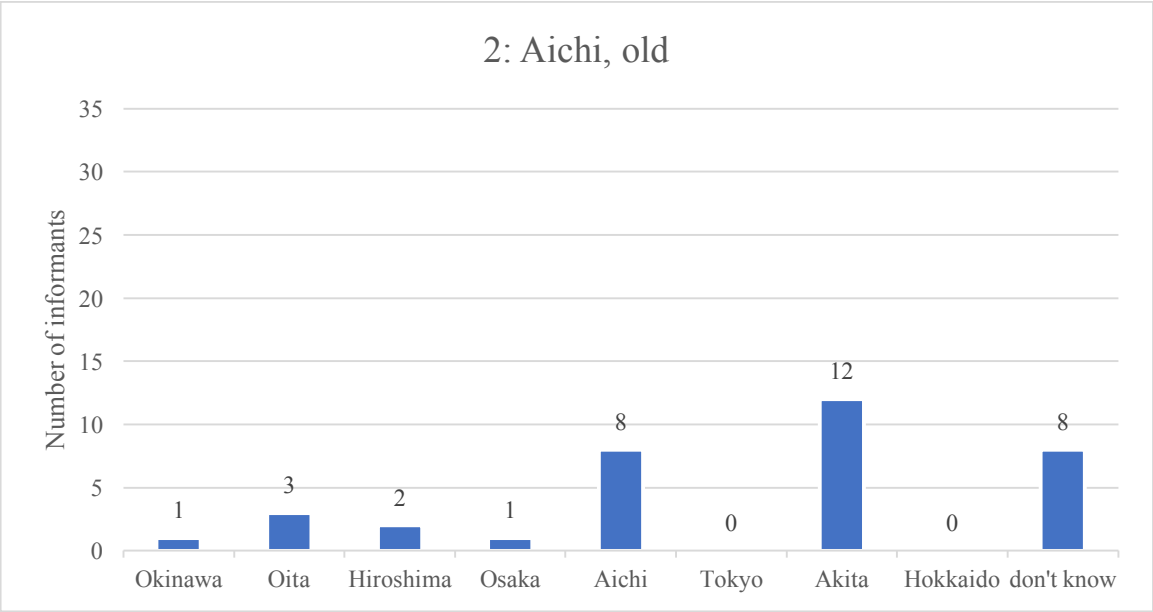


Figure 8 Japanese informants' guesses of dialect: old Aichi speakers



Eight and nine people respectively could correctly identify the Aichi dialect. The young speakers were mistaken for Tokyo speakers by 13 people. Surprisingly, twelve people chose Akita as the answer for the old speakers.

Figure 9 Japanese informants' guesses of dialect: young Tokyo speakers

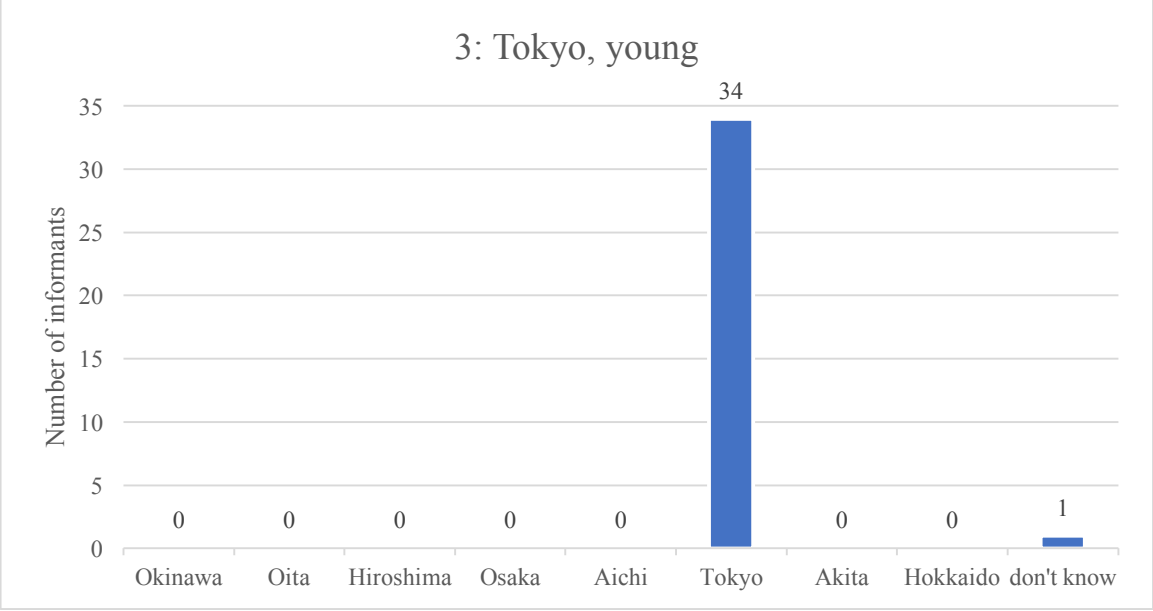
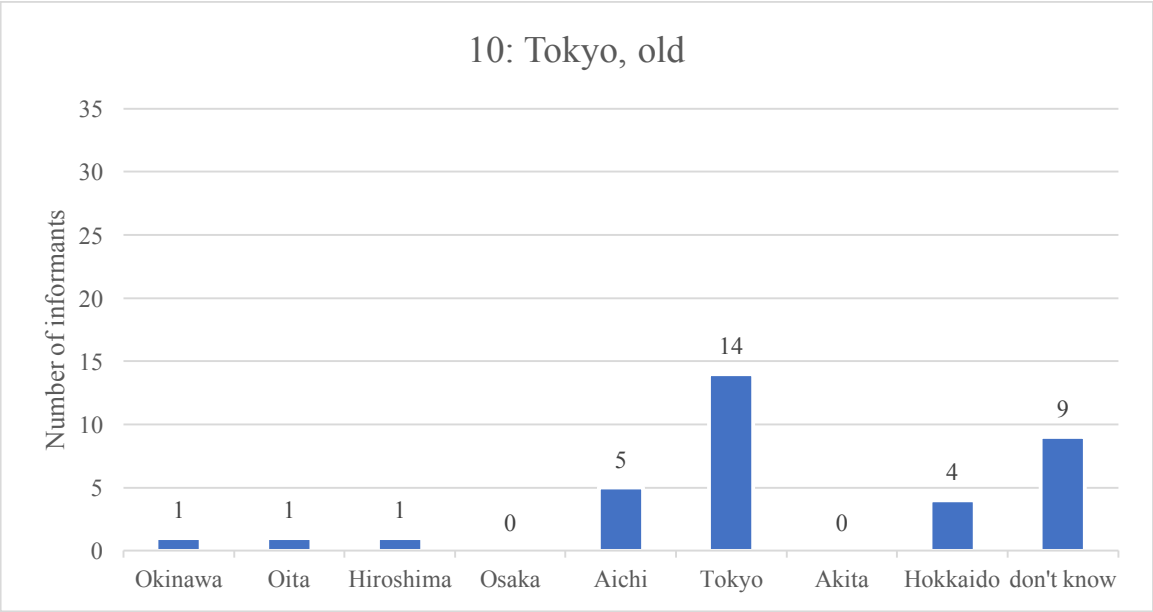


Figure 10 Japanese informants' guesses of dialect: old Tokyo speakers



The young Tokyo speech was by far the easiest to identify for the Japanese. All informants but one correctly guessed Tokyo. The old speakers were more difficult, 14 informants correctly identified this, while nine informants chose ‘don’t know’.

Figure 11 Japanese informants’ guesses of dialect: young Akita speakers

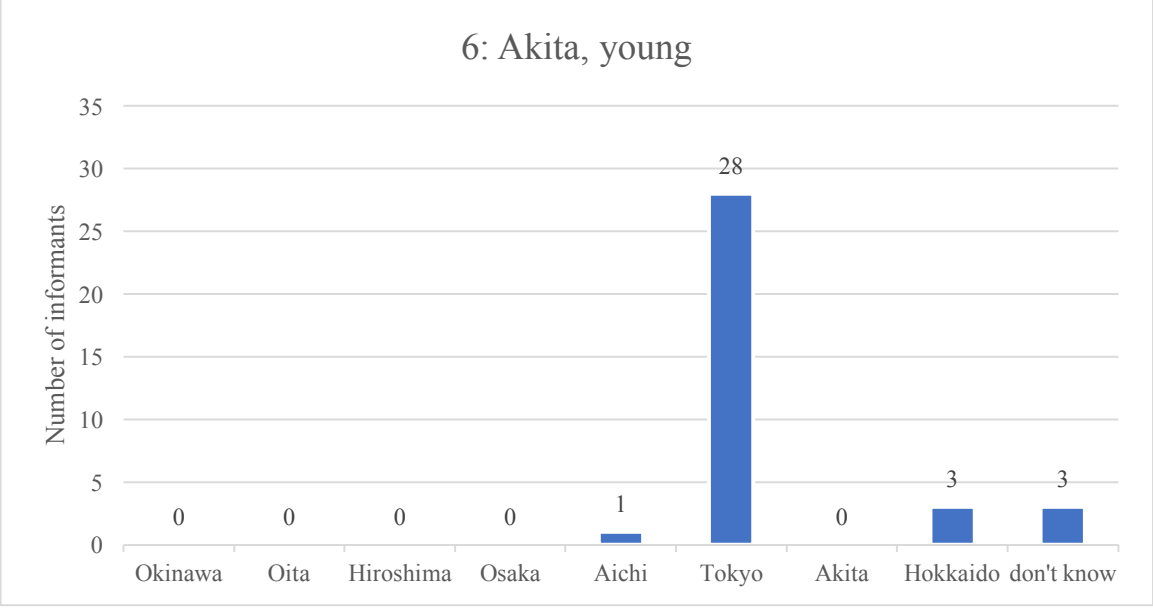
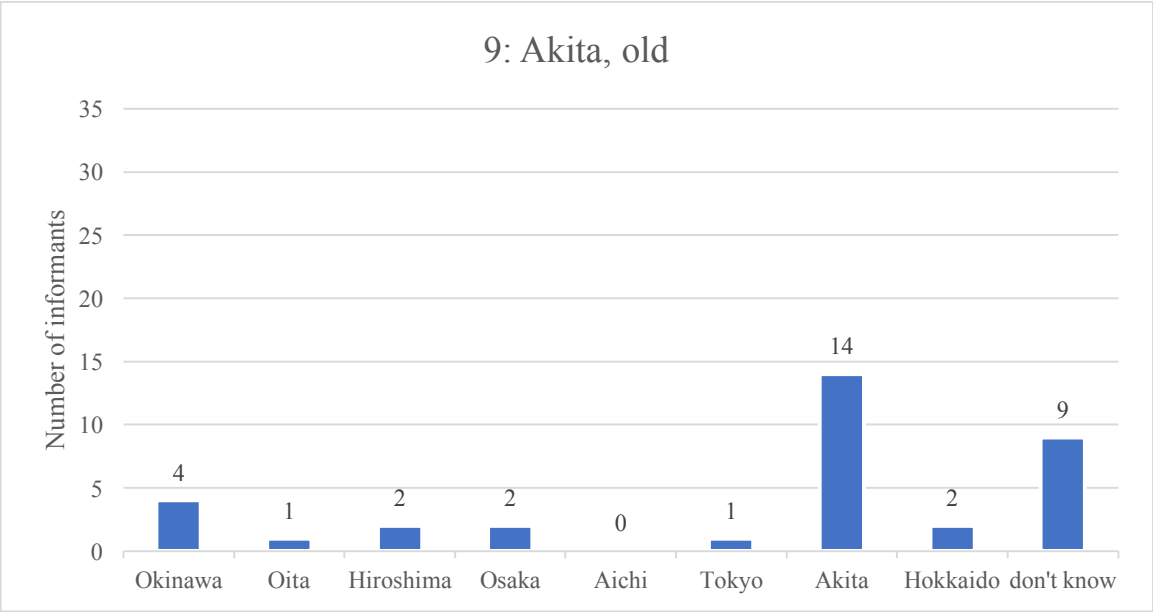


Figure 12 Japanese informants’ guesses of dialect: old Akita speakers



There were considerable differences in guesses between the young and old Akita speakers. Unexpectedly, not one informant could identify this the young speech as Akita dialect. Instead, 28 informants (80%) recognised it as Tokyo speech. On the other hand, 14 informants correctly identified the old speakers. However, nine people chose the 'don't know' option, the remaining guesses were spread out between Hiroshima, Hokkaido, Oita, Okinawa, Osaka, and Tokyo. Out of these, Okinawa had the most guesses, which is quite interesting, given its geographical location.

The Swedish informants' guesses are presented in the figures below.

Figure 13 Swedish informants' guesses of dialect: young Oita speakers

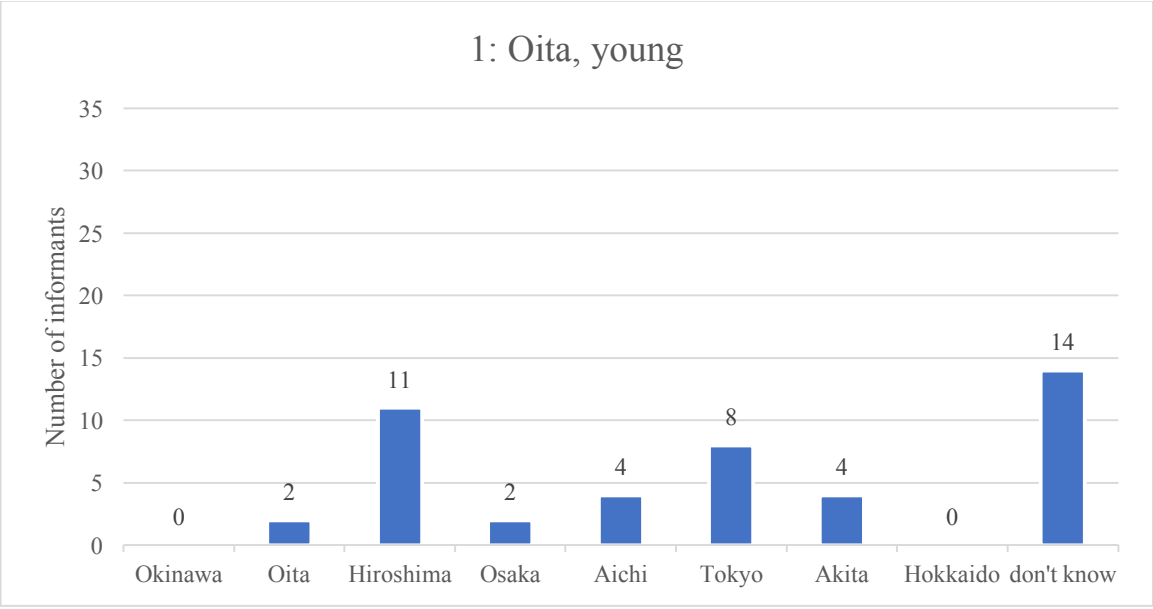
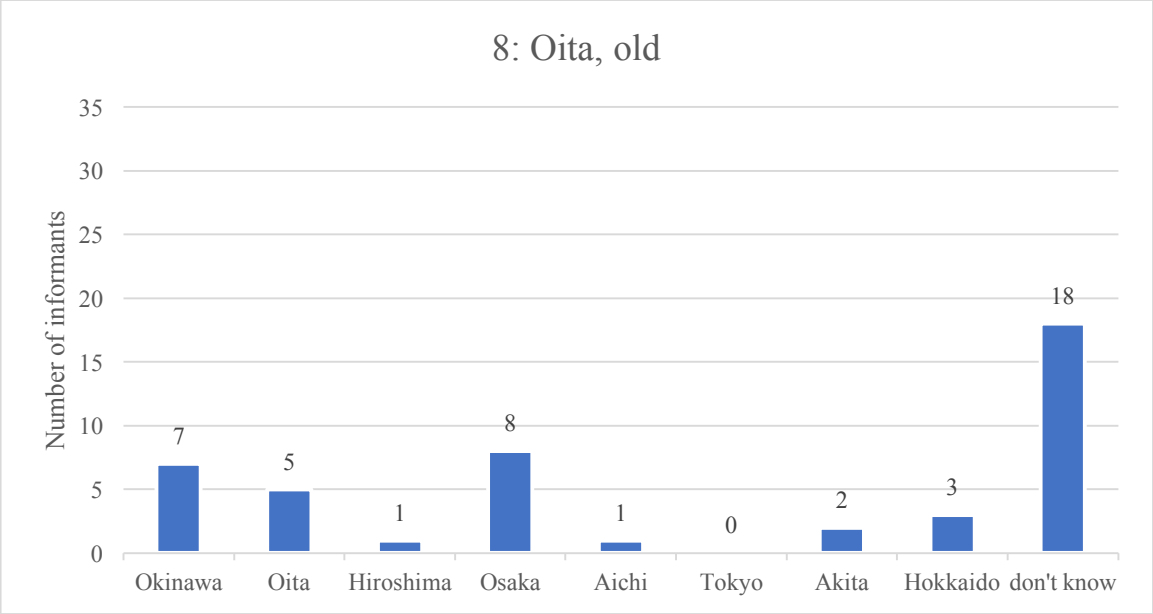


Figure 14 Swedish informants' guesses of dialect: old Oita speakers



The number of informants who correctly identified the Oita dialect was quite low for both speakers, while a large number of people said not to know the answer. What is interesting in these results, is that eleven informants mistook the young speakers' dialect for Hiroshima dialect.

Figure 15 Swedish informants' guesses of dialect: young Hiroshima speakers

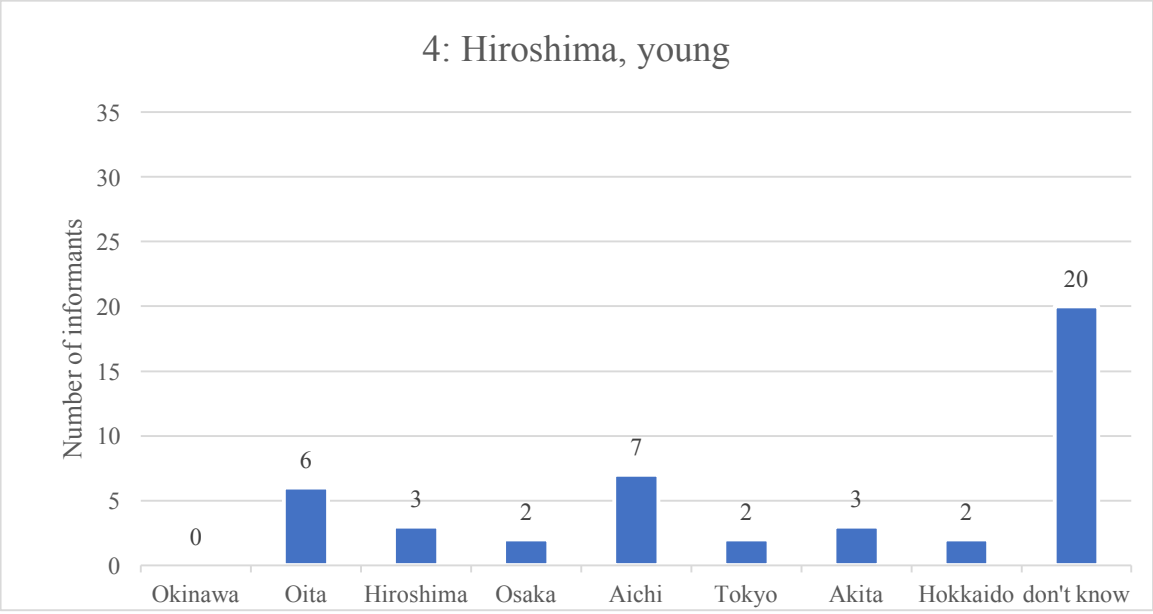
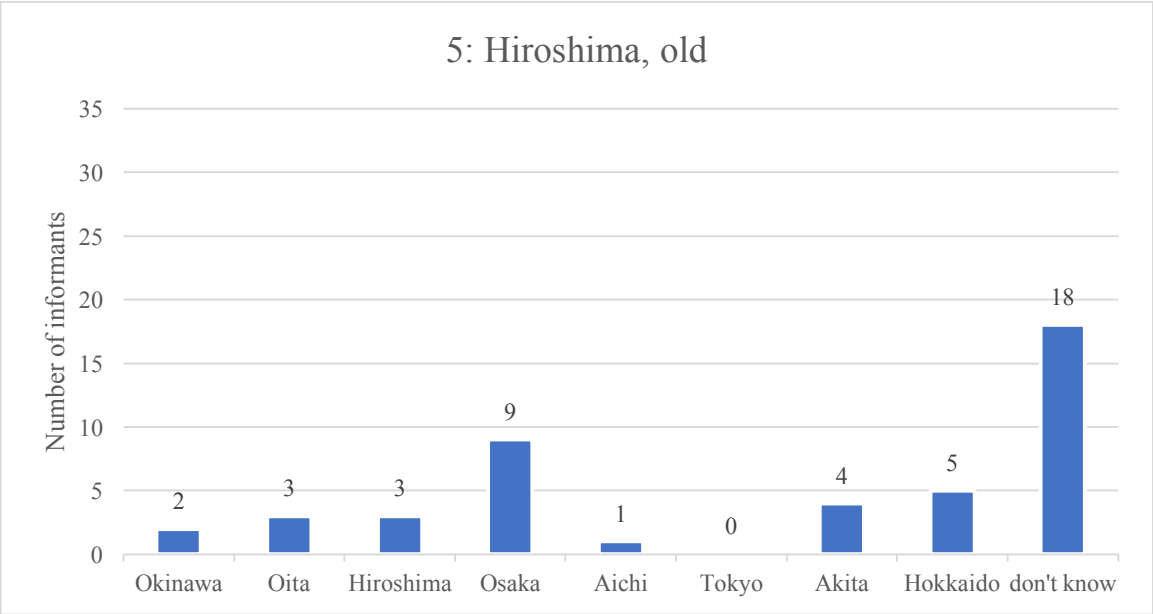


Figure 16 Swedish informants' guesses of dialect: old Hiroshima speakers



Again, most of the informants could not guess which dialect the Hiroshima speakers had. Only three people on each audio clip correctly identified the dialect. Nine informants misidentified the old speakers' speech as Osaka dialect.

Figure 17 Swedish informants' guesses of dialect: young Aichi speakers

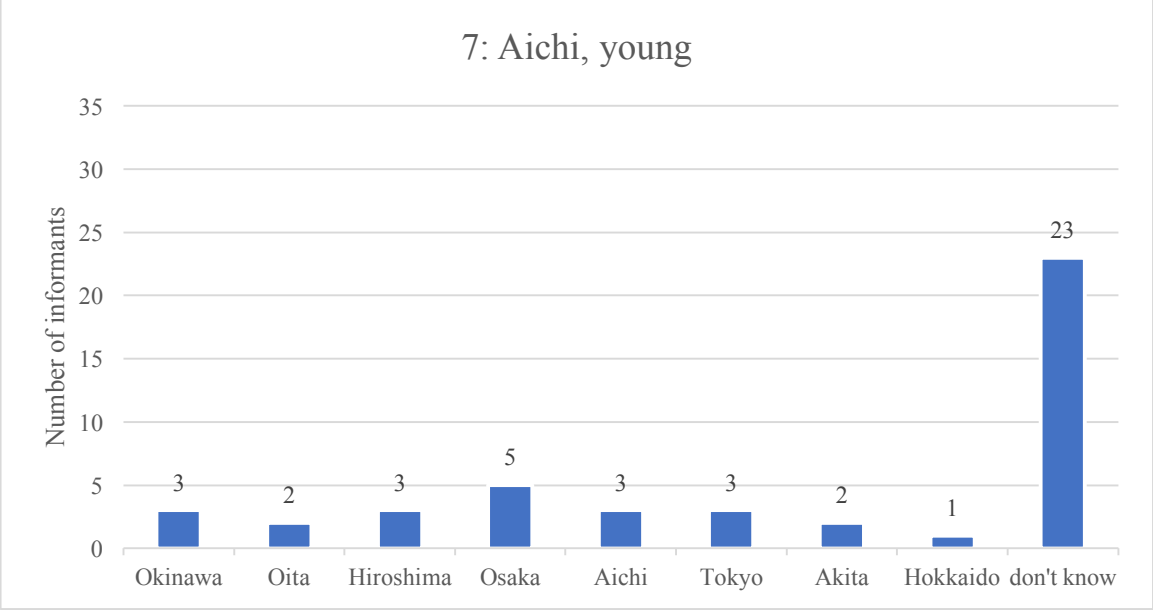
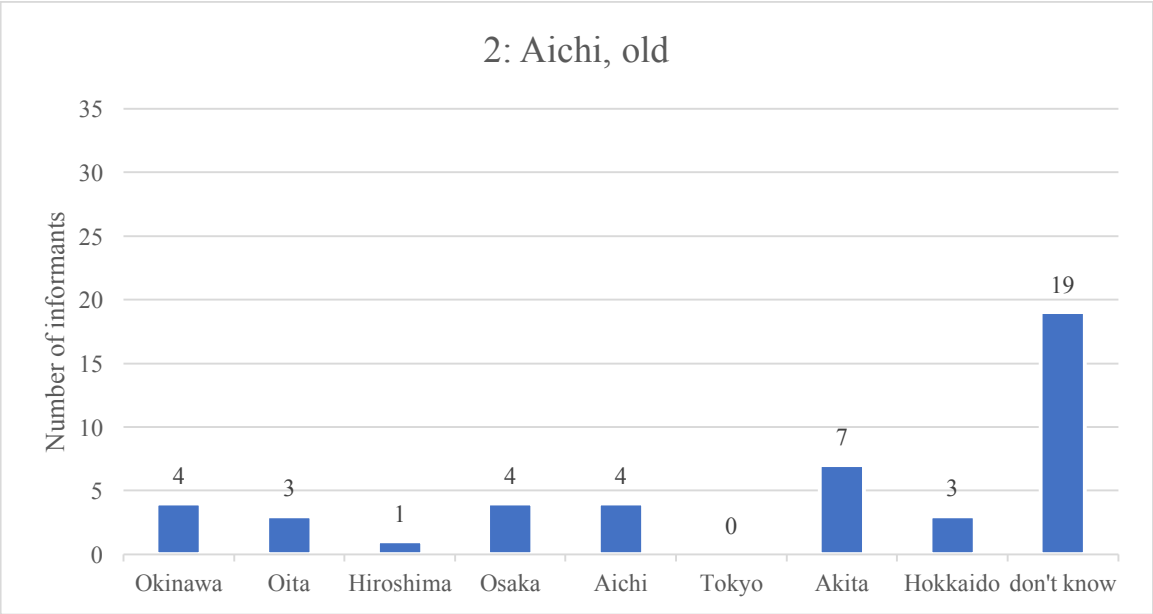


Figure 18 Swedish informants' guesses of dialect: old Aichi speakers



It is apparent from these figures that Aichi dialect was very difficult for the Swedish informants to place. Most of the informants chose the 'don't know' option for both audio clips, while the remaining responses were quite evenly spread out between the various dialects. Interestingly, the most common guess for the young speakers was Osaka, while for the old speakers it was Akita.

Figure 19 Swedish informants' guesses of dialect: young Tokyo speakers

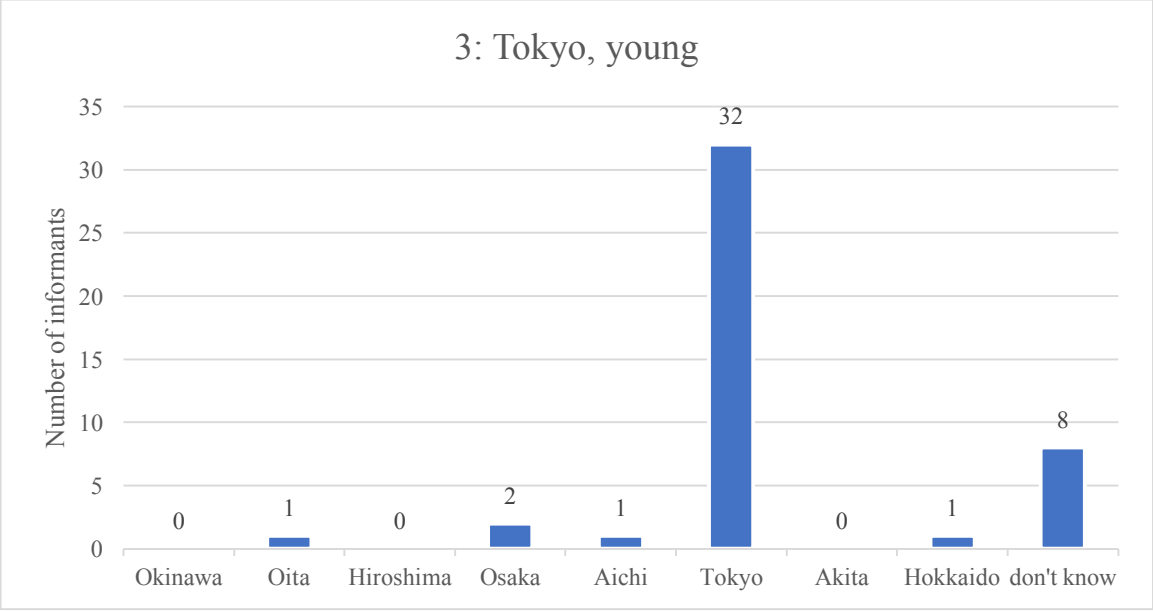
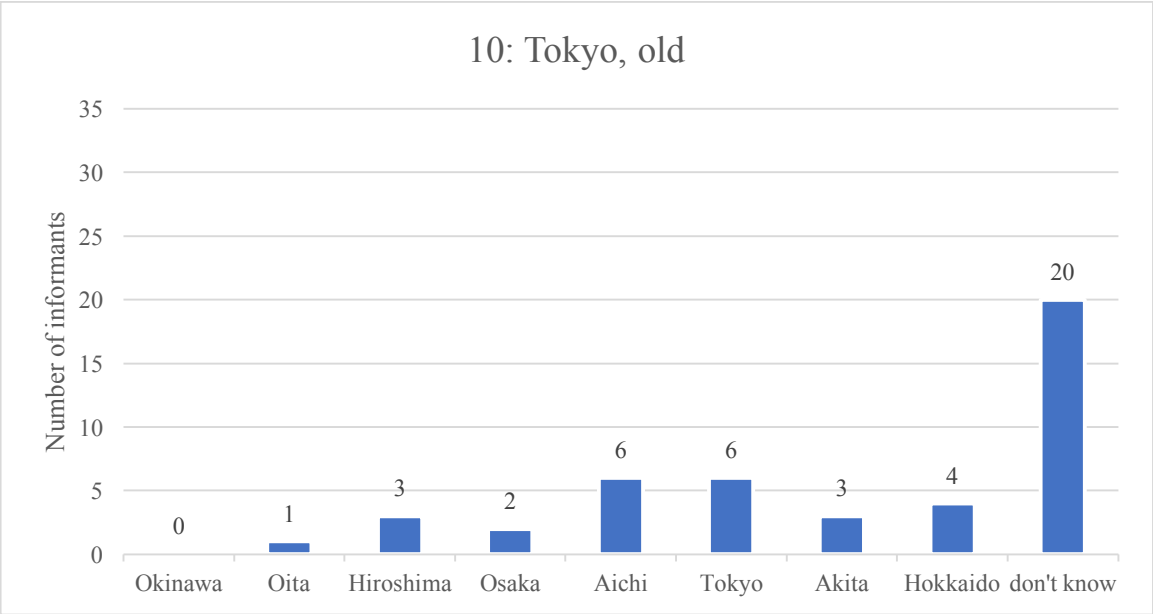


Figure 20 Swedish informants' guesses of dialect: old Tokyo speakers



The overwhelming majority of the informants could identify the young Tokyo speakers correctly. In contrast, only six informants were accurate in their identification of the old speakers. An equally large number thought the speakers to be from Aichi. Almost half of the informants said to not know which dialect was being spoken.

Figure 21 Swedish informants' guesses of dialect: young Akita speakers

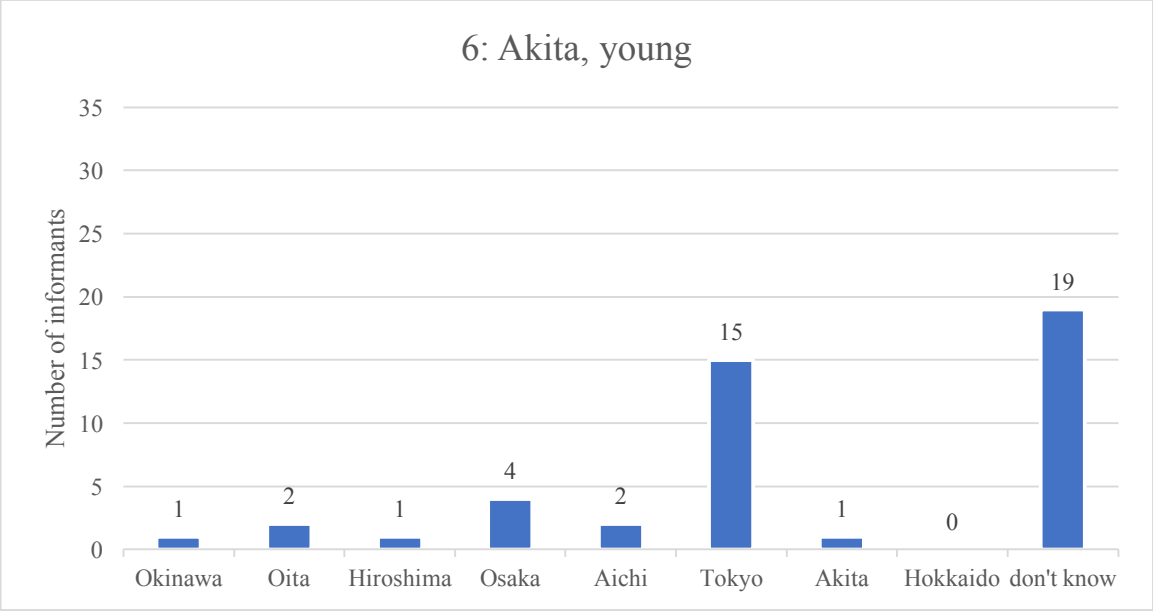
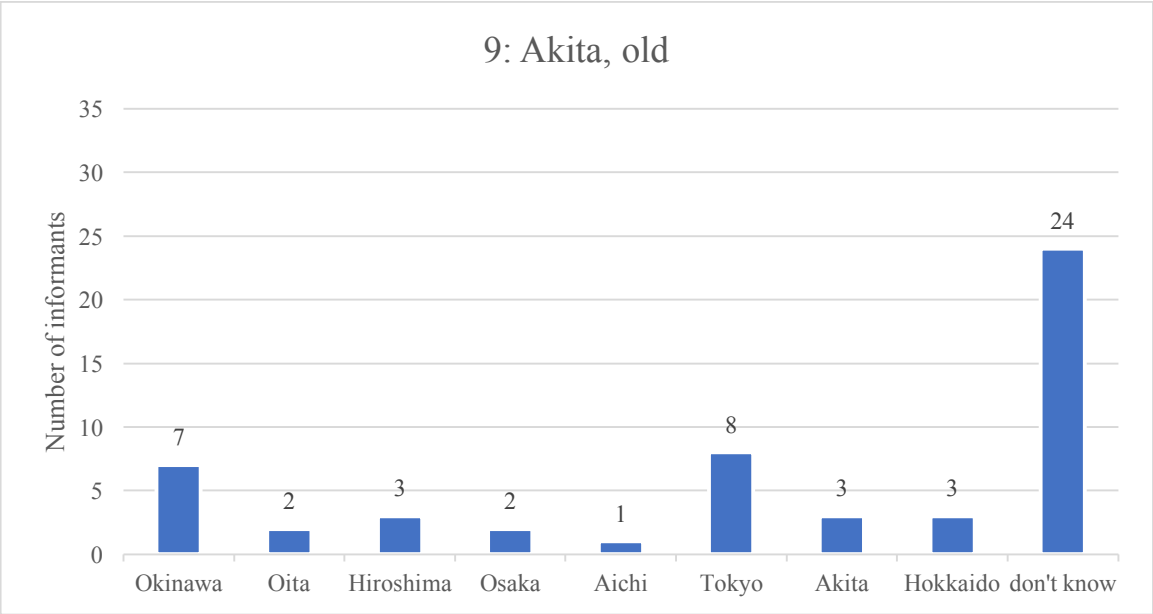


Figure 22 Swedish informants' guesses of dialect: old Akita speakers



The number of accurate identifications for the Akita dialect was very low: only one person got the young speakers' dialect correct, while three people could identify the old speakers. What stands out is the 15 informants who guessed that the young speakers spoke Tokyo dialect. This misidentification outnumbers all of the correct identifications made by the Swedish informants except that for the young Tokyo speakers.

4.4.2 Effects of background variables on identifications

When examining the identification rates by the self-perceived proficiency groups, it was found that the majority of the clips showed a pattern of beginner informants having the lowest percentage of correct guesses, good informants having the next to highest percentage, and the very good informants having the highest percentage.

The two informants from Kyushu had a slightly higher identification rate than the rest of the informants: 25% against 18,57%. Interesting to note is that the Kyushu informants mistook Oita for Hiroshima in all other cases, which was also the trend among the rest of the informants.

The six informants from the Chubu region had an identification rate of 41,67%, which is higher than the other informants' 20,69%.

Interestingly, the informants from the Kanto region had a slightly lower identification rate than the rest of the informants, 67,39% against 70,83%. Nonetheless, they were above 50%. It must be noted that in this case, the informants with Kanto origin actually outnumbered the informants from outside Kanto, thus potentially skewing the results in the opposite way from the previously mentioned dialects.

The three informants from Tohoku had a 33,33% identification rate, which was slightly higher than the rest, who had 20,31%. Again, however, the number of Tohoku informants is too small for a conclusion. Interestingly, one of the informants, who was from Miyagi prefecture, mistook the old Akita speech for Oita. Both of the informants from Akita, however, could correctly identify this.

As mentioned previously, no informants were from Chugoku; thus, there are no results on this dialect.

Looking at the time spent in Japan by the Swedish informants, a few tendencies were noticed. The informants who had never been to Japan were unable to identify any of the dialects correctly except old Oita and old Tokyo. On the other hand, seven of the audio clips were identified by at least one of the informants who had spent less than 3 months in Japan, and all but one audio clip were identified by at least one of the informants who had been in Japan for 3–12 months. In addition, all of the informants who had lived in Japan for more than 12 months could identify the young Tokyo speakers.

For the Oita dialect, the two informants who had lived in Kyushu had a recognition rate of 50%, compared to the rest of the informants' 5,81%. However, since they are only two people, it is difficult to say anything regarding this.

The informants who had lived in the Chubu region had an identification rate of 20% for the Aichi dialect, which is higher than the other informants' 6,25%.

The informants who had lived in the Kanto region had an identification rate of 55% for the Tokyo dialect, which is higher than the rest at 38,57%. In this case, it may be slightly safer to make a generalisation, given the higher number of informants – an even larger number would be better, however.

As mentioned previously, no informants had spent more than three months in Hiroshima or Akita.

Chapter 5
Discussion

5.1 Overview

In chapter 4, the results of the present study were presented. In chapter 5, the findings will be discussed in relation to the research questions.

5.2 Research question 1: Are Swedish learners of Japanese able to identify Japanese dialects?

The analysis of the results from the dialect identification task showed a very low percentage of correct identifications from the Swedish informants, most of them ranging between 2,22% and 13,33%. The exception was the audio clip for the young speakers from Tokyo, which 71,11% of the Swedes could identify accurately. This high recognition rate is very likely due to the dominance of Tokyo dialect in most Japanese-speaking environments. As the standard speech variety of Japanese, it is the most commonly heard type of Japanese in the classroom and in the media. Furthermore, the majority of the informants had visited or lived in the Tokyo area, and it was found that informants who had spent more than three months in the area were better at recognising the Tokyo speech than those who had not been there for that period of time. In contrast, as a foreign learner of Japanese, one is likely not as easily exposed to non-standard varieties of Japanese, resulting in a lower awareness of regional dialects. Another factor that may have affected the results, is that some of the speakers presented in the survey conducted simply may not have been very dialectal in their speech. There were many instances of young speakers' dialects being misidentified as Tokyo dialect, whereas this happened for few of the old speakers. The most striking case is the speech of the young Akita speakers, which was identified as Tokyo by more people than any correct identifications of any dialect. Judging by the Japanese informants' results, where not a single person guessed Akita, but 80% guessed Tokyo, it seems plausible that the young Akita speakers in fact spoke standard Japanese altogether, with no traces of their regional dialect.

5.3 Research question 2: What attitudes do Swedish learners of Japanese hold towards different Japanese dialects?

The results of the evaluations of the dialects did not indicate any particularly strongly held attitudes towards the dialects included in the study. In general, ratings were quite neutral. The most varying opinions between dialects were found within the 'clear' trait, where the old Oita speakers were rated very low, contrasted by the very high rating for young Tokyo speech. The other traits could generally be seen following a similar pattern: the old Oita speech was the least favoured overall, while the young Tokyo speech was the most positively perceived. Furthermore, more than the dialects separately, a tendency could be found in the differences between the young and the old speakers, where the young consistently were rated higher than the old, on all traits except 'funny'. Since the old speakers generally spoke with thicker dialects than their younger counterparts, these findings could suggest a slightly negative attitude towards Japanese dialects in general, as opposed to standard Japanese. This could possibly be explained in the same way as Chang (2012) suggested, that speech varieties which non-native learners find difficult to hear and understand, i.e. are not clear, are perceived more negatively than varieties which are clear.

5.4 Research question 3: What background variables (if any) affect the Swedish learners' attitudes towards Japanese dialects?

When analysing the results of the evaluations according to background variables, gender, self-perceived proficiency of Japanese, frequency of consumption of Japanese language media and previous exposure to Japanese were found to have effects on the ratings of the dialects.

Female informants demonstrated a tendency to perceive the speakers as more intelligent and gentle than the male informants did, while the male informants tended to perceive them as funnier than the female informants did. In addition, there was some indication that female informants favour standard Japanese more than the males, as their ratings were higher for the young Tokyo and Akita speakers, who, as mentioned previously, were perceived as speaking very standardised Japanese.

The informants who rated their own proficiency of Japanese as very good consistently perceived the dialects as clearer than the less proficient informants. They also found the old speakers' speech more pleasant than the less proficient informants. On the other hand, informants who perceived themselves as beginners tended to think of the old speakers as more gentle than the more proficient informants.

The informants who watched Japanese language media at least once a week rated old speakers lower on pleasantness than the informants who did not watch Japanese media as often, whereas the informants who watched Japanese media less than once a month generally gave lower ratings to the young speakers. In addition, the group who watched Japanese media less than once a month also tended to rate dialects lower on the 'funny' trait than the rest of the informants, while those who watched at least once a week tended to rate them higher.

Just as the group of informants with very good proficiency in Japanese, informants who had spent more than 12 months in Japan rated the speakers higher on the 'clear' trait than the other groups did. Moreover, it was interesting to note that informants who had lived in Chubu rated the Aichi dialect more positively on most traits, just like native speakers from the region did.

5.5 Research question 4: Do the Swedish learners' identification ability and attitudes differ in comparison to those of native Japanese speakers? How?

In general, the Swedish informants' attitudes towards Japanese dialects were found to be quite similar to those of the native Japanese informants. Regarding identification of dialects, both groups performed quite poorly, but the Swedish informants clearly found it more difficult, which is natural, given that they have not been exposed to dialects as much as the native speakers have.

Chapter 6
Conclusion

The present study has investigated the attitudes of Swedish learners of Japanese towards Japanese dialects, along with their ability to identify these dialects. It can be concluded that Swedish learners' attitudes generally resemble those displayed by native Japanese speakers. However, the Swedish learners are quite poor at identifying dialects.

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Appendix

Swedish questionnaire: background information

(Page 1)

Kön *
- Man
- Kvinna

Är svenska ditt modersmål/ett av dina modersmål? *
- Ja
- Nej

Studerar du/har du studerat japanska? *
- Ja
- Nej

Hur länge har du studerat/studerade du japanska? *

Avser främst heltidsstudier. Om du har studerat japanska på gymnasiet, vänligen räkna denna tid som mindre än ett år.

- Mindre än ett år
- Ungefär ett år
- Ungefär två år
- Tre år eller mer

Hur bra tycker du att du är på japanska? *
- Nybörjare
- Bra
- Mycket bra

Hur ofta tittar du på japanskspråkig anime, drama eller film? *
- Mindre än en gång om året
- Minst en gång om året
- Minst en gång i månaden

- Minst en gång i veckan

Har du varit i Japan? *

- Ja
- Nej

Var i Japan var du, och hur länge var du där? *

Vänligen ange stad och/eller prefektur. Om du har varit på flera platser, ange hur lång tid du var på varje plats. T.ex. Tokyo 3 månader, Osaka 1 vecka.

_____

(Page 4–13)

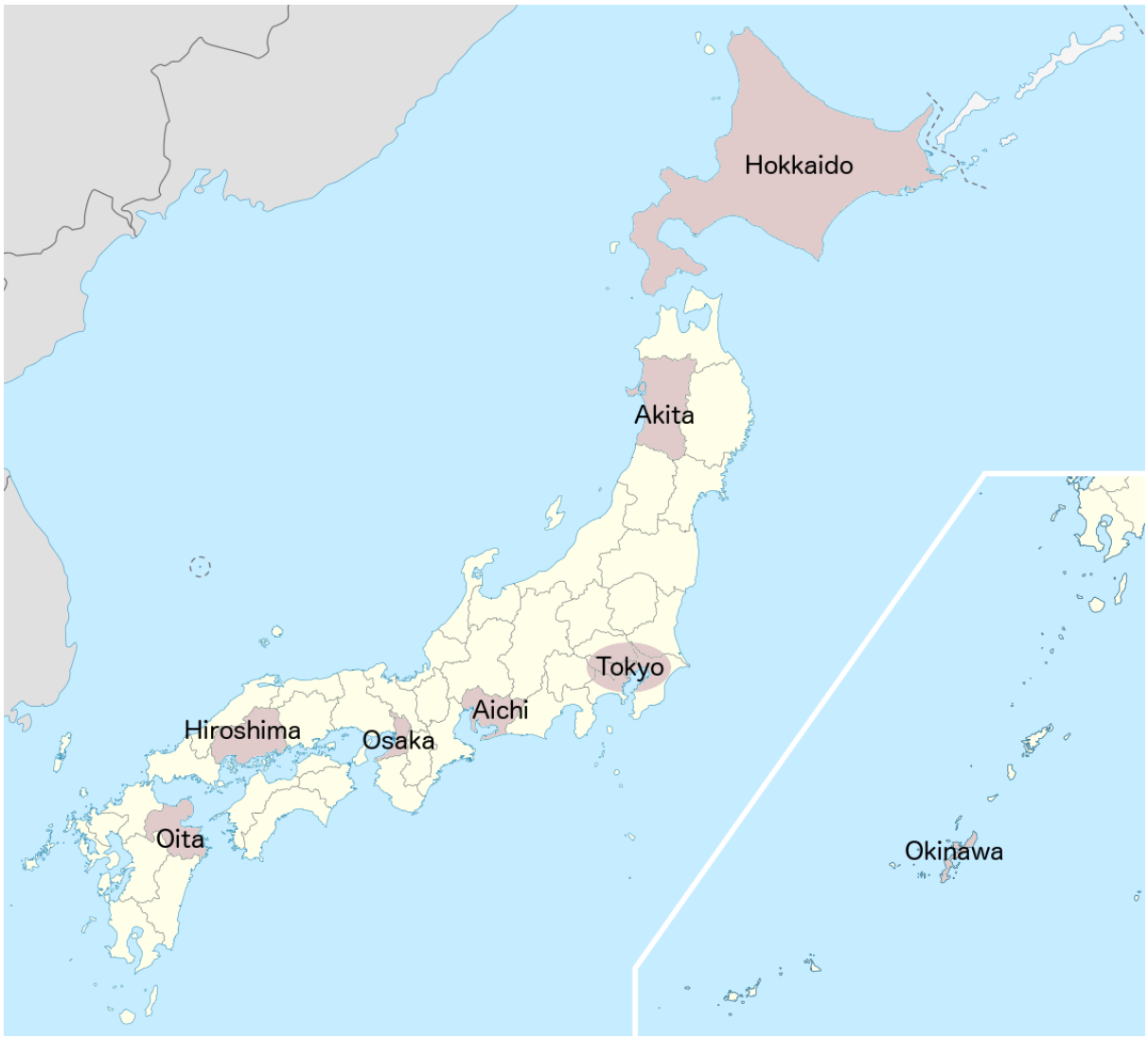
Du kommer att få lyssna på tio olika ljudklipp ur telefonkonversationer på japanska, och svara på några frågor angående dessa. Varje klipp är ungefär 40 sekunder långt. Du får lyssna på ljudklippen hur många gånger du vill.

Hur uppfattar du talet i det här ljudklippet?

Fokusera på själva språket, inte på vad personerna pratar om.

[AUDIO CLIP]

Behagligt	1	2	3	4	5	Obehagligt
Tydligt	1	2	3	4	5	Otydligt
Ovänligt	1	2	3	4	5	Vänligt
Roligt	1	2	3	4	5	Inte roligt
Inte intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	Intelligent



Vilken dialekt tror du talas i det här ljudklippet? *

- Aichi
- Akita
- Hiroshima
- Hokkaido
- Oita
- Okinawa
- Osaka
- Tokyo
- Vet inte

(Page 14)

Nu är du färdig med enkäten! Om du har några kommentarer kan du skriva dem nedan, eller maila till jap15efa@student.lu.se.

Japanese questionnaire

(Page 1)

性別 *

- 男性
- 女性

どの都道府県の出身ですか。 *

_____

どれくらいよく日本語のアニメ、ドラマ、映画を見ますか。 *

- 一年に一回以下
- 一年に一回以上
- 一ヶ月に一回以上
- 一週間に一回以上

(Page 2–11)

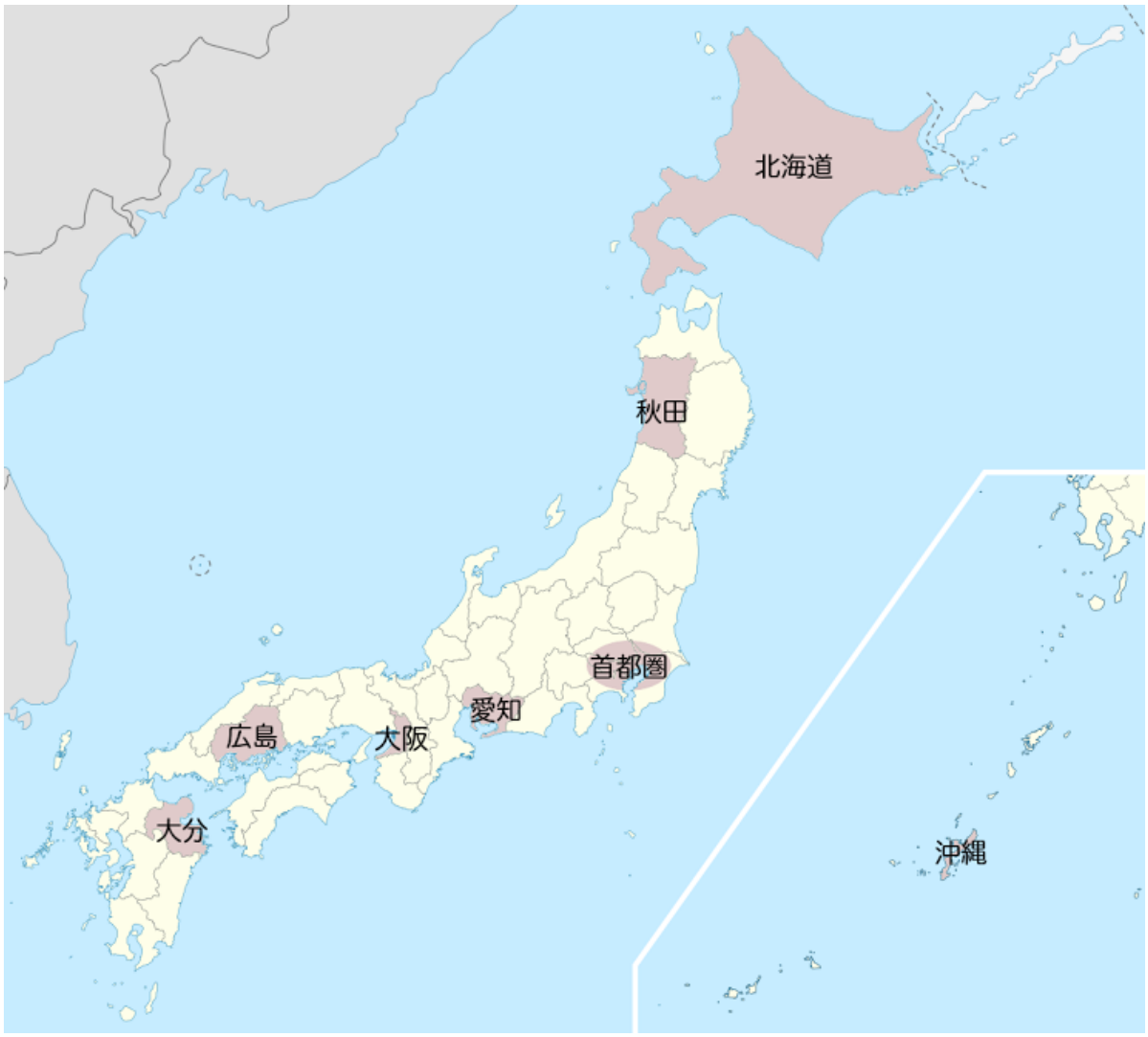
次の電話での会話の部分を聴いて、質問を答えてください。１０の会話があって、それぞれのファイルは約４０秒です。ファイルを何度も聴いてもいいです。

この会話の話はどんな印象を与えますか。

会話の話題ではなくて、言葉だけに集中してください。

[AUDIO CLIP]

心地よい	1	2	3	4	5	心地よくない
明確だ	1	2	3	4	5	明確ではない
優しくない	1	2	3	4	5	優しい
滑稽だ	1	2	3	4	5	滑稽ではない
利口ではない	1	2	3	4	5	利口だ



この会話ではどの方言が話されていると思いますか。 *

- 愛知
- 秋田
- 大分
- 大阪
- 沖縄
- 首都圏
- 広島
- 北海道
- わからない

(Page 12)

以上でアンケートは終わりです。もしなにかコメントがあれば、ここに書くか、または jap15efa@student.lu.se にメールをしてください。ご協力、ありがとうございました。